1 1975

SHANG-CHI! IRON FIST! SONS OF THE TIGER!

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION™

SAVAGE FISTS OF KUNG FU™

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Meet the Savage Fists of Kung Fu in the following four frantic fight-fests!
Read on, True Believer, it's a martial arts masterpiece
served up just for you!

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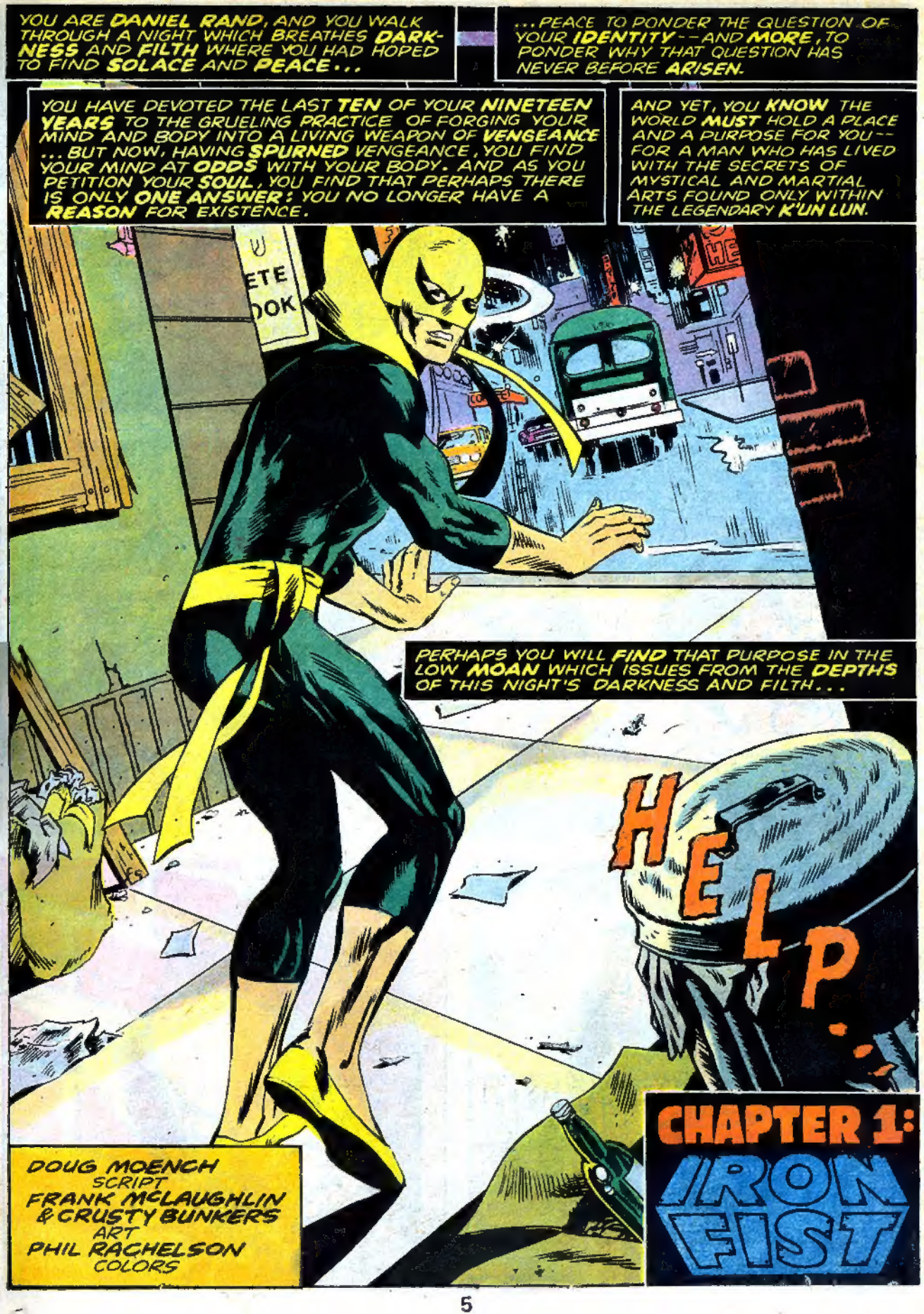
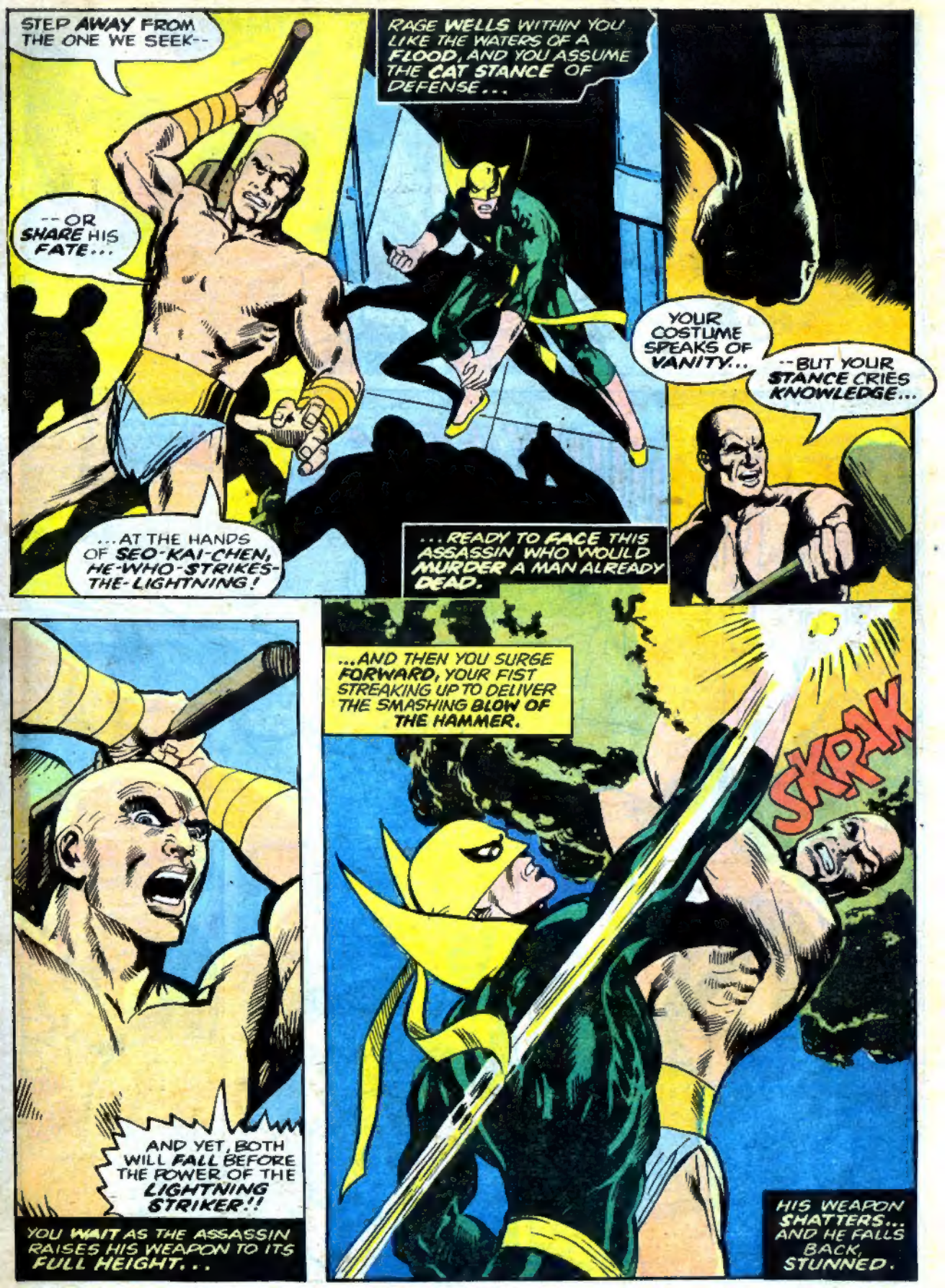
THE MASTER PLAN OF FU MANCHU

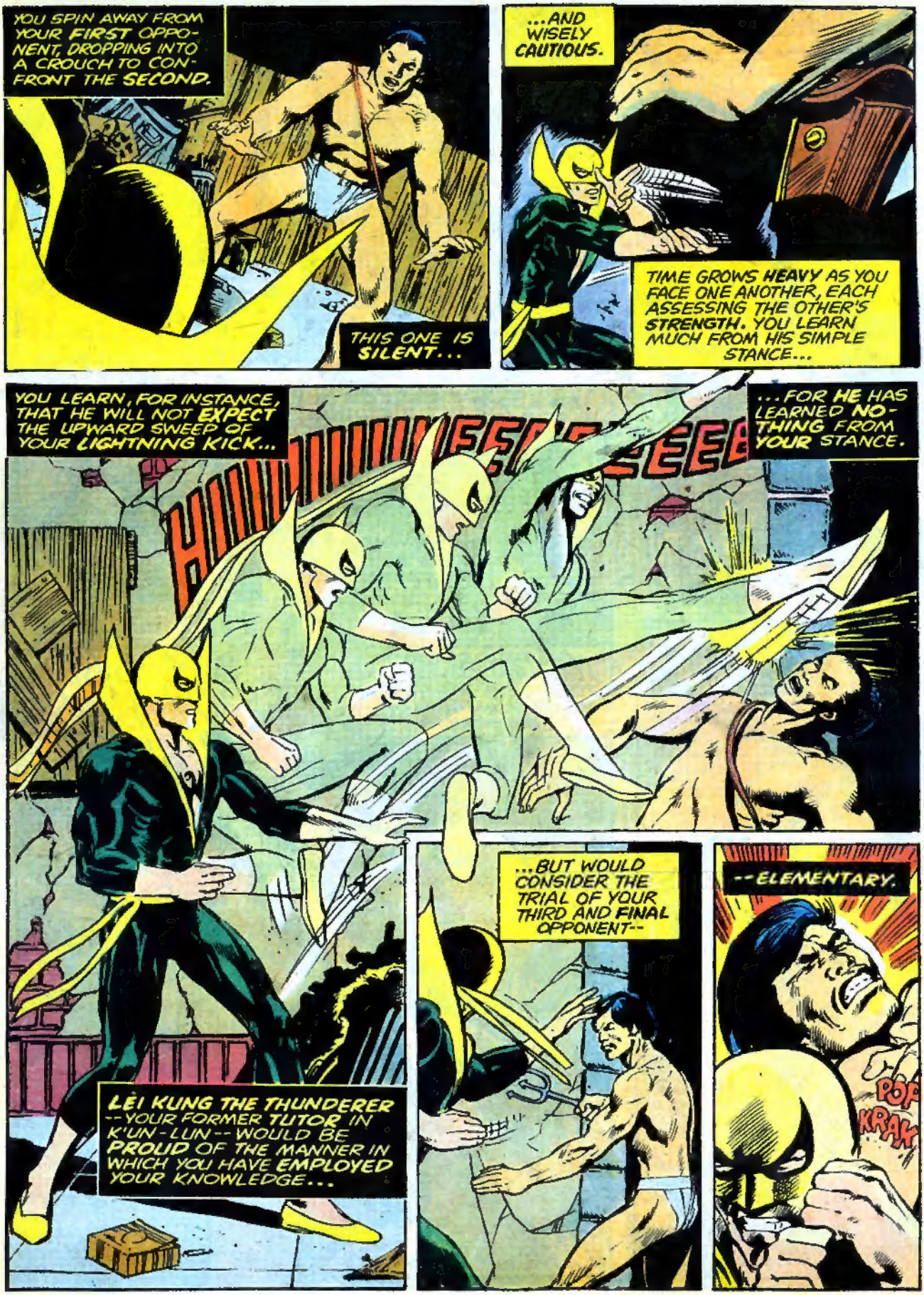
FOR NEARLY A CENTURY, THE SHADOW OF DR. FU MANCHU HAS LAIN HEAVILY ON THE SOIL OF THIS PLANET. HIS SCHEMES FOR WORLD CONQUEST ARE LEGEND, HIS EVIL BOUNDLESS, AND HIS VICTIMS WITHOUT NUMBER.
TODAY, THAT DARK SHADOW REACHES FURTHER THAN EVER BEFORE IN AN ATTEMPT TO RULE THE WORLD THROUGH ITS PEACEMAKERS. TODAY, FU MANCHU STRIKES AT THE UNITED NATIONS.
FIVE MEN STAND AGAINST THE INSIDIOUS MASTERMIND AND HIS PLAN. FIVE MARTIAL ARTS MASTERS.
DANNY RAND: WHO HAS LEARNED THE FIGHTING SECRETS OF ANCIENT K'UN-LUN AND FORSAKEN IMMORTALITY TO BATTLE INJUSTICE AS THE COSTUMED HERO CALLED IRON FIST.
LIN SUN, ABE BROWN, BOB DIAMOND: THE STUDENTS OF MASTER KEE, WHOSE INDIVIDUAL SKILLS AND STRENGTHS ARE TRIPLED WHEN THEY JOIN TOGETHER AS THE SONS OF THE TIGER.
SHANG-CHI: MASTER OF KUNG FU, WHOSE BURDEN IS THE HEAVIEST OF ALL, FOR HE IS THE SON OF FU MANCHU!

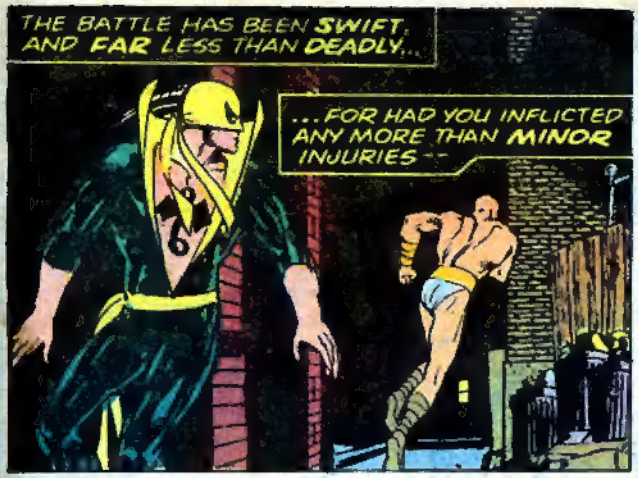
TONY ISABELLA: SCRIPT | JOHN BUSCEMA: ART | PHIL RACHELSON: COLORS

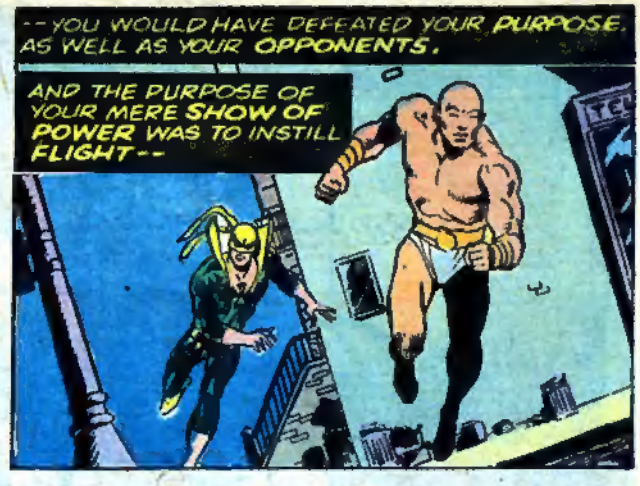

YOU ARE DANIEL RAND, AND YOU WALK THROUGH A NIGHT WHICH BREATHES DARKNESS AND FILTH WHERE YOU HAD HOPED TO FIND SOLACE AND PEACE...
...PEACE TO PONDER THE QUESTION OF YOUR IDENTITY--AND MORE, TO PONDER WHY THAT QUESTION HAS NEVER BEFORE ARISEN.
YOU HAVE DEVOTED THE LAST TEN OF YOUR NINETEEN YEARS TO THE GRUELING PRACTICE OF FORGING YOUR MIND AND BODY INTO A LIVING WEAPON OF VENGEANCE ...BUT NOW, HAVING SPURNED VENGEANCE, YOU FIND YOUR MIND AT ODDS WITH YOUR BODY. AND AS YOU PETITION YOUR SOUL, YOU FIND THAT PERHAPS THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER: YOU NO LONGER HAVE A REASON FOR EXISTENCE.
AND YET, YOU KNOW THE WORLD MUST HOLD A PLACE AND A PURPOSE FOR YOU--FOR A MAN WHO HAS LIVED WITH THE SECRETS OF MYSTICAL AND MARTIAL ARTS FOUND ONLY WITHIN THE LEGENDARY K'UN LUN.
PERHAPS YOU WILL FIND THAT PURPOSE IN THE LOW MOAN WHICH ISSUES FROM THE DEPTHS OF THIS NIGHT'S DARKNESS AND FILTH...
HELP...
CHAPTER 1:
IRON FIST
DOUG MOENCH
SCRIPT
FRANK McLAUGHLIN & CRUSTY BUNKERS
ART
PHIL RACHELSON
COLORS

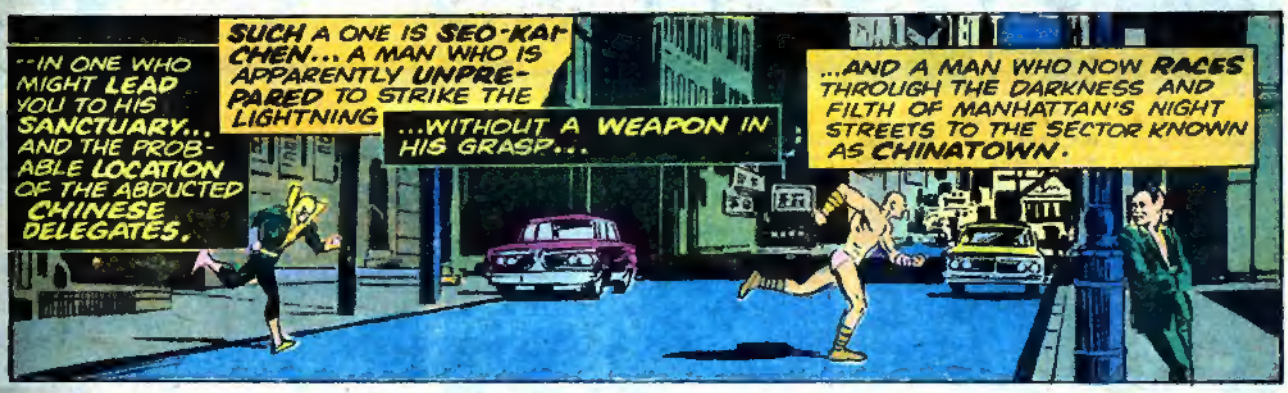
THE MOAN LEADS TO A MAN SPRAWLED IN GARBAGE AND PAIN. FEAR FILLS HIS FEEBLE EYES AS HE PERCEIVES YOUR COSTUME THROUGH THE GLOOM...
I SEE... THAT MY CALL FOR AID... HAS ONLY SUMMONED ONE OF THOSE... WHO WOULD KILL ME...
I WON'T KILL YOU--
--BUT YOU WILL DIE IF I DON'T GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL.
THE MAN WINCES AS YOU PROBE HIS MANY WOUNDS, BUT THEN URGENCY FILLS HIS VOICE AS HE GASPS--
NO... THERE IS NO ...TIME.
IF YOU ARE NOT... ONE OF THE COSTUMED ASSASSINS ... YOU MUST HELP... THE OTHERS...
I AM... ONE OF THE NEWLY ARRIVED CHINESE DELEGATES ... TO THE UNITED NATIONS. THERE ARE... SIX OF US...
WE HAD... JUST ENTERED OUR HOTEL ROOM ... WHEN THE ... ASSASSINS BURST IN... ABDUCTED US...
OUTSIDE, THERE WAS ... A STRUGGLE...
I WAS IN-JURED... BUT ESCAPED ... AND EVEN NOW... THEY SEARCH FOR ME...
YOU MUST FIND ...THE OTHERS ...AND FREE THEM BEFORE ...IT IS TOO...
--AHK-K-K...
THE MAN SLUMPS FORWARD, HIS DEATH LAID AT YOUR KNEES...
.. WALLOWING, STILL, IN THE ECHO OF HIS SELFLESS APPEAL.
YOU RISE FROM HIS LIFELESS FORM--
--INTO A SILENT LENGTH OF SHADOW...


STEP AWAY FROM THE ONE WE SEEK--
--OR SHARE HIS FATE...
...AT THE HANDS OF SEO-KAI-CHEN, HE-WHO-STRIKES-THE-LIGHTNING!
RAGE WELLS WITHIN YOU LIKE THE WATERS OF A FLOOD, AND YOU ASSUME THE CAT STANCE OF DEFENSE...
...READY TO FACE THIS ASSASSIN WHO WOULD MURDER A MAN ALREADY DEAD.
YOUR COSTUME SPEAKS OF VANITY...
--BUT YOUR STANCE CRIES KNOWLEDGE...
AND YET, BOTH WILL FALL BEFORE THE POWER OF THE LIGHTNING STRIKER!!
YOU WAIT AS THE ASSASSIN RAISES HIS WEAPON TO ITS FULL HEIGHT...
...AND THEN YOU SURGE FORWARD, YOUR FIST STREAKING UP TO DELIVER THE SMASHING BLOW OF THE HAMMER.
SKRAK
HIS WEAPON SHATTERS... AND HE FALLS BACK, STUNNED.


YOU SPIN AWAY FROM YOUR FIRST OPPONENT, DROPPING INTO A CROUCH TO CONFRONT THE SECOND.
THIS ONE IS SILENT...
...AND WISELY CAUTIOUS.
TIME GROWS HEAVY AS YOU FACE ONE ANOTHER, EACH ASSESSING THE OTHER'S STRENGTH. YOU LEARN MUCH FROM HIS SIMPLE STANCE...
YOU LEARN, FOR INSTANCE, THAT HE WILL NOT EXPECT THE UPWARD SWEEP OF YOUR LIGHTNING KICK...
...FOR HE HAS LEARNED NOTHING FROM YOUR STANCE.
LEI KUNG THE THUNDERER --YOUR FORMER TUTOR IN K'UN-LUN-- WOULD BE PROUD OF THE MANNER IN WHICH YOU HAVE EMPLOYED YOUR KNOWLEDGE...
...BUT WOULD CONSIDER THE TRIAL OF YOUR THIRD AND FINAL OPPONENT--
--ELEMENTARY.
POP
KRAK


THE BATTLE HAS BEEN SWIFT, AND FAR LESS THAN DEADLY...
...FOR HAD YOU INFLICTED ANY MORE THAN MINOR INJURIES--

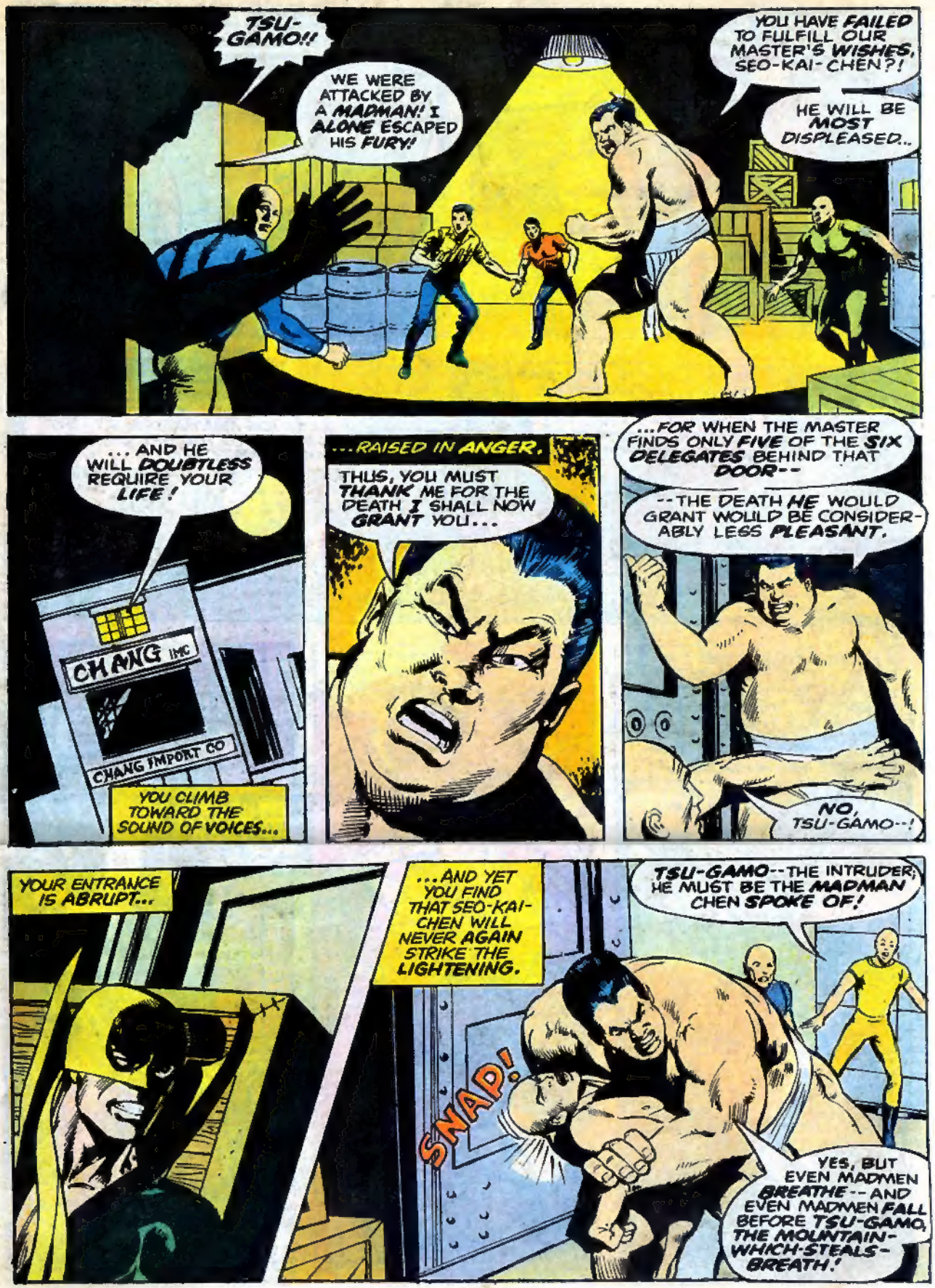

--YOU WOULD HAVE DEFEATED YOUR PURPOSE, AS WELL AS YOUR OPPONENTS.
AND THE PURPOSE OF YOUR MERE SHOW OF POWER WAS TO INSTILL FLIGHT--


--IN ONE WHO MIGHT LEAD YOU TO HIS SANCTUARY... AND THE PROBABLE LOCATION OF THE ABDUCTED CHINESE DELEGATES.
SUCH A ONE IS SEO-KAI CHEN... A MAN WHO IS APPARENTLY UNPREPARED TO STRIKE THE LIGHTNING
...WITHOUT A WEAPON IN HIS GRASP...
...AND A MAN WHO NOW RACES THROUGH THE DARKNESS AND FILTH OF MANHATTAN'S NIGHT STREETS TO THE SECTOR KNOWN AS CHINATOWN.

YOU HAVE CONDUCTED THE FINAL LEG OF YOUR PURSUIT IN STEALTH, AND THEREFORE CONVINCED THE ASSASSIN OF HIS SUCCESS IN ELUDING YOU, EVEN AS HE APPROACHES THE REAR ENTRANCE OF A RAMSHACKLE WAREHOUSE...
PITY FOR A BLIND MAN...?

OUT OF MY WAY, BEGGER!
AAIEEE!

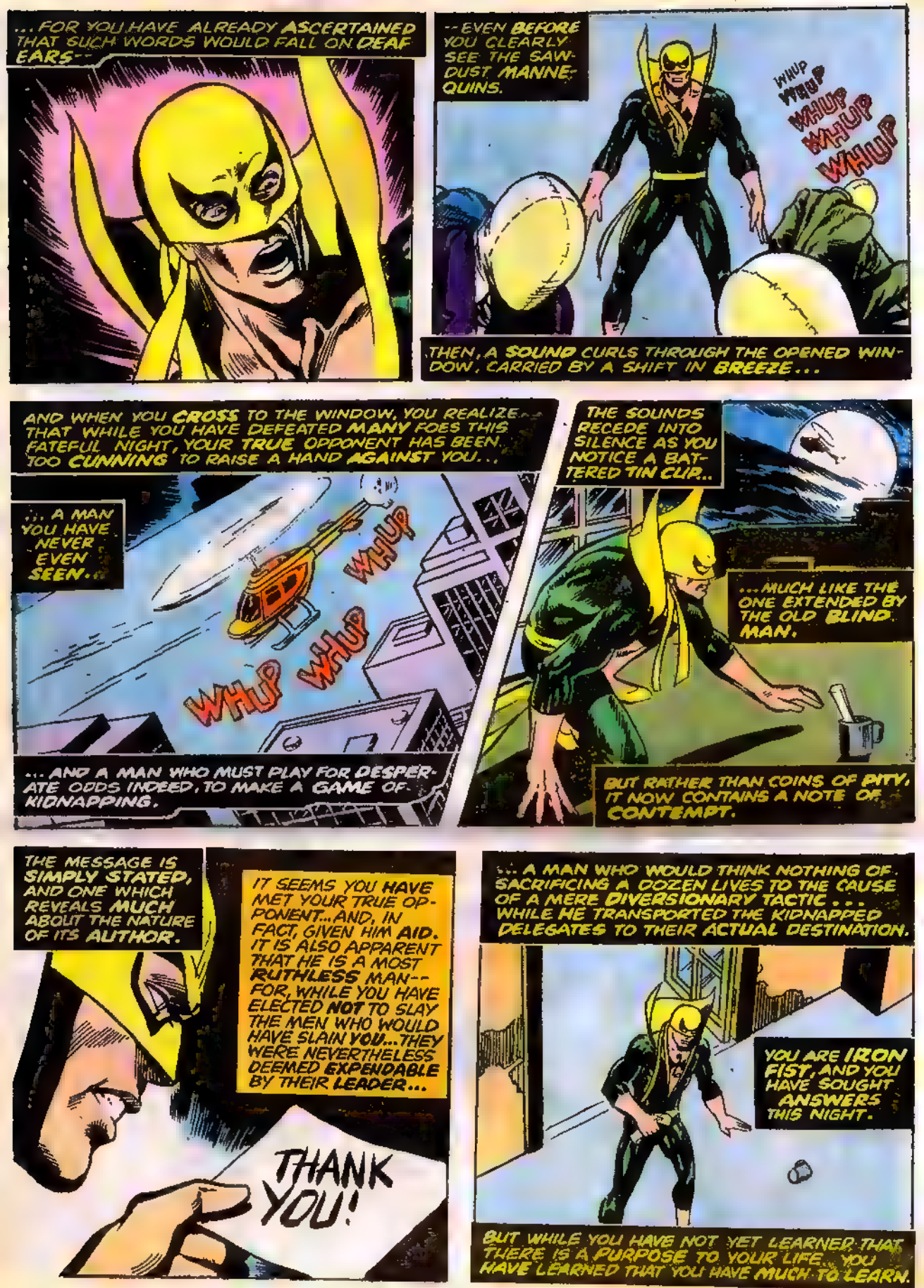
SEO-KAI-CHEN ENTERS THE ANCIENT WAREHOUSE, AND YOU ABANDON YOUR STEALTH... EMERGING FROM THE SHADOWS TO AID THE STRICKEN BLIND MAN.
THERE IS TIME NOW, FOR YOU HAVE LOCATED YOUR OBJECTIVE...

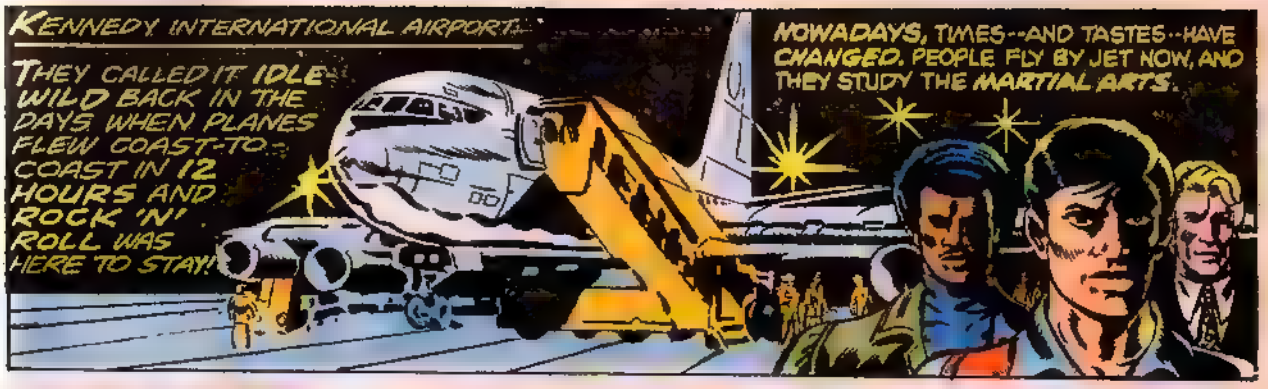

TSU-GAMO!!
WE WERE ATTACKED BY A MADMAN! I ALONE ESCAPED HIS FURY!
YOU HAVE FAILED TO FULFILL OUR MASTER'S WISHES, SEO-KAI-CHEN?!
HE WILL BE MOST DISPLEASED..
... AND HE WILL DOUBTLESS REQUIRE YOUR LIFE!
CHANG IMC
CHANG IMPORT CO
YOU CLIMB TOWARD THE SOUND OF VOICES...
...RAISED IN ANGER.
THUS, YOU MUST THANK ME FOR THE DEATH I SHALL NOW GRANT YOU...
...FOR WHEN THE MASTER FINDS ONLY FIVE OF THE SIX DELEGATES BEHIND THAT DOOR--
--THE DEATH HE WOULD GRANT WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY LESS PLEASANT.
NO, TSU-GAMO--!
YOUR ENTRANCE IS ABRUPT...
...AND YET YOU FIND THAT SEO-KAI-CHEN WILL NEVER AGAIN STRIKE THE LIGHTENING.
SNAP!
TSU-GAMO--THE INTRUDER; HE MUST BE THE MADMAN CHEN SPOKE OF!
YES, BUT EVEN MADMEN BREATHE--AND EVEN MADMEN FALL BEFORE TSU-GAMO, THE MOUNTAIN-WHICH-STEALS-BREATH!

YOU LEAVE THE WINDOW BEHIND YOU, TO HURTLE ABOVE THE HEADS OF THE PANICKED ASSASSINS... AND THERE YOU GRAB A DANGLING ROPE --
STOP HIM!!
--WHICH CARRIES YOUR DRAGON STAMP KICK IN A SWOOPING ARC...
...TERMINATING IN IMPACT WITH THE MAN WHO PROFESSES THE STATUS OF MOUNTAIN.
THEN YOU UNLEASH YOUR BODY IN A SAVAGE BALLET OF SWIRLING, CHURNING MOTION, BECOMING A SWIFT CYCLONE AMONG STRAW.
AYYYY!
SPAK
PUNT
KRAK
TWO OF THE ASSASSINS ARE FELLED IN THE COURSE OF A SINGLE ELEPHANT KICK...
...ANOTHER BEFORE THE ROCK-SMASH BLOW...

THE MONKEY-BLOW--
--AND A SIMPLE EVASIVE MANEUVER--
--REMOVE THE FINAL TWO FROM CONFLICT...
...LEAVING ONLY TSU-GAMO--
--THE MOUNTAIN-WHICH-STEALS-BREATH!
OUR MASTER WOULD WISH YOU DEAD--!
AND WHAT OUR MASTER WISHES--
SMAK
AHRRR!!
WAK
THE MAMMOTH SUMO BREAKS HIS RIB-CRUSHING HOLD, FREEING YOU TO GULP STOLEN BREATH.

OFF-BALANCE, IN THE THROES OF PAIN, TSU-GAMO IS EASILY BORNE TO THE FLOOR--
--AND DISPATCHED WITH A SHARP CHOP TO THE NECK.
KK
YOU RISE FROM THE FALLEN SUMO, AND YOUR EYES SURVEY THE FACE OF A SOLID STEEL-RIVETED DOOR.
YOU ASSESS THE DOOR'S STRENGTH, EVEN AS YOU HAVE GAUGED THE STRENGTH OF A DOZEN FOES THIS NIGHT... AND YOU REALIZE THAT IF YOU ARE TO REACH THE CAPTIVE DELEGATES BEHIND THIS DOOR--
--YOU MUST INVOKE THE SEETHING POWER OF--
--IRON FIST!
KIIAIIII
SHTOOM
YOU STEP THROUGH THE MOLTEN SLAG OF THE CRUMPLED DOOR, INTO A ROOM ADORNED WITH DIM LIGHT AND THE HUDDLED FORMS OF FIVE BOUND MEN...
BUT EVEN AS YOU FIRST GLIMPSE THE CAPTIVES, YOU ALSO GLIMPSE THE FLUTTER OF CURTAINS IN AN OPENED WINDOW...
...AND YOU DO NOT WASTE BREATH ON WORDS OF COMFORT...


...FOR YOU HAVE ALREADY ASCERTAINED THAT SUCH WORDS WOULD FALL ON DEAF EARS--
--EVEN BEFORE YOU CLEARLY SEE THE SAWDUST MANNEQUINS.
WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
THEN, A SOUND CURLS THROUGH THE OPENED WINDOW, CARRIED BY A SHIFT IN BREEZE...
AND WHEN YOU CROSS TO THE WINDOW, YOU REALIZE... THAT WHILE YOU HAVE DEFEATED MANY FOES THIS FATEFUL NIGHT, YOUR TRUE OPPONENT HAS BEEN... TOO CUNNING TO RAISE A HAND AGAINST YOU...
...A MAN YOU HAVE NEVER EVEN SEEN...
WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
...AND A MAN WHO MUST PLAY FOR DESPERATE ODDS INDEED, TO MAKE A GAME OF KIDNAPPING.
THE SOUNDS RECEDE INTO SILENCE AS YOU NOTICE A BATTERED TIN CUP...
...MUCH LIKE THE ONE EXTENDED BY THE OLD BLIND MAN.
BUT RATHER THAN COINS OF PITY, IT NOW CONTAINS A NOTE OF CONTEMPT.
THE MESSAGE IS SIMPLY STATED, AND ONE WHICH REVEALS MUCH ABOUT THE NATURE OF ITS AUTHOR.
IT SEEMS YOU HAVE MET YOUR TRUE OPPONENT...AND, IN FACT, GIVEN HIM AID. IT IS ALSO APPARENT THAT HE IS A MOST RUTHLESS MAN--FOR, WHILE YOU HAVE ELECTED NOT TO SLAY THE MEN WHO WOULD HAVE SLAIN YOU...THEY WERE NEVERTHELESS DEEMED EXPENDABLE BY THEIR LEADER...
THANK YOU!
...A MAN WHO WOULD THINK NOTHING OF SACRIFICING A DOZEN LIVES TO THE CAUSE OF A MERE DIVERSIONARY TACTIC... WHILE HE TRANSPORTED THE KIDNAPPED DELEGATES TO THEIR ACTUAL DESTINATION.
YOU ARE IRON FIST, AND YOU HAVE SOUGHT ANSWERS THIS NIGHT.
BUT WHILE YOU HAVE NOT YET LEARNED THAT THERE IS A PURPOSE TO YOUR LIFE... YOU HAVE LEARNED THAT YOU HAVE MUCH TO LEARN.


KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT...
THEY CALLED IT IDLE WILD BACK IN THE DAYS WHEN PLANES FLEW COAST-TO-COAST IN 12 HOURS AND ROCK 'N' ROLL WAS HERE TO STAY!
NOWADAYS, TIMES--AND TASTES--HAVE CHANGED. PEOPLE FLY BY JET NOW, AND THEY STUDY THE MARTIAL ARTS.

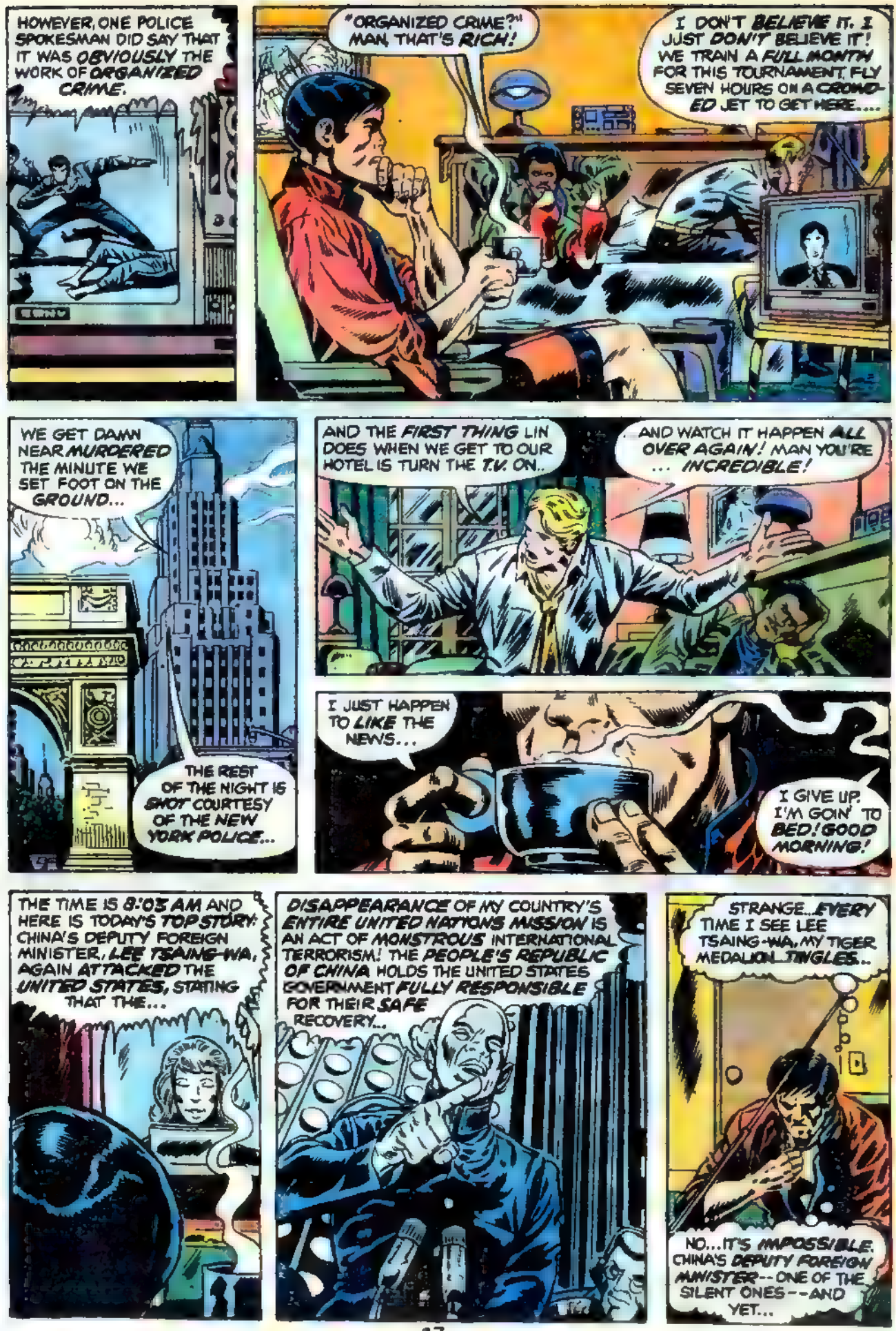
AND, OCCASIONALLY, THEY HOLD TOURNAMENTS...
...SUCH AS THE MARIS INVITATIONAL, IN NEW YORK, JOKINGLY CALLED "THE WORLD SERIES OF KUNG FU!"
MAN, I AM BEAT! OL' ABE COULD REALLY USE SOME SHUT-EYE RIGHT AB...

CHAPTER 2: THE SONS OF THE TIGER!

YOUR REST WILL HAVE TO WAIT, ABE...
I'M AFRAID OUR ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT ANTICIPATED...
YOU HAVE INTERFERED ONCE TOO OFTEN IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE SILENT ONES...
...FOR THAT, YOU MUST PAY!
THAT IT HAS, LIN SUN!

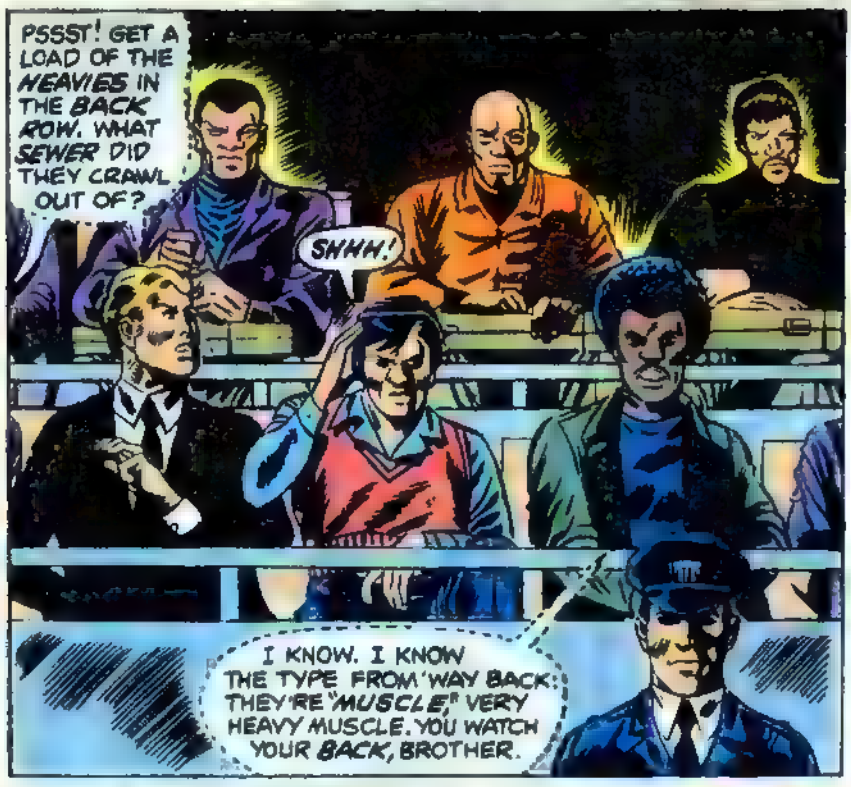
CHRIS CLAREMONT: SCRIPT / HERB TRIMPE: ART / PHIL RACHELSON: COLOR

HA!!
KRAK
MAN, THAT'S IT! THIS TAKES THE EVER-LOVIN' CAKE!
ALL WE DO IS BUST SOME A' LO CHIN'S PUSHERS AN' TOTAL HIS SONIC ZAP GUN...
TRACK!
AN' ALL OF A SUDDEN WE'RE IN A BLOOD FEUD FOR LIFE!
YOU WANT LIFE TO BE DULL ALL THE TIME?
HEY, FELLAS, FELLAS, YOU'RE NOT PLAYING FAIR!
YOU HIT ME TWO AT A TIME--YOU GET CREAMED TWO AT A TIME... OKAY?
HOW YOU DOING, LIN?
I AM DOING WELL, ROBERT.
REEEE-
KA!
QUITE WELL, INDEED....
"AUTHORITIES ARE AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN THE MOTIVE BEHIND LAST NIGHT'S BRUTAL FREE-FOR-ALL AT KENNEDY AIRPORT INVOLVING A GANG OF COSTUMED THUGS...."

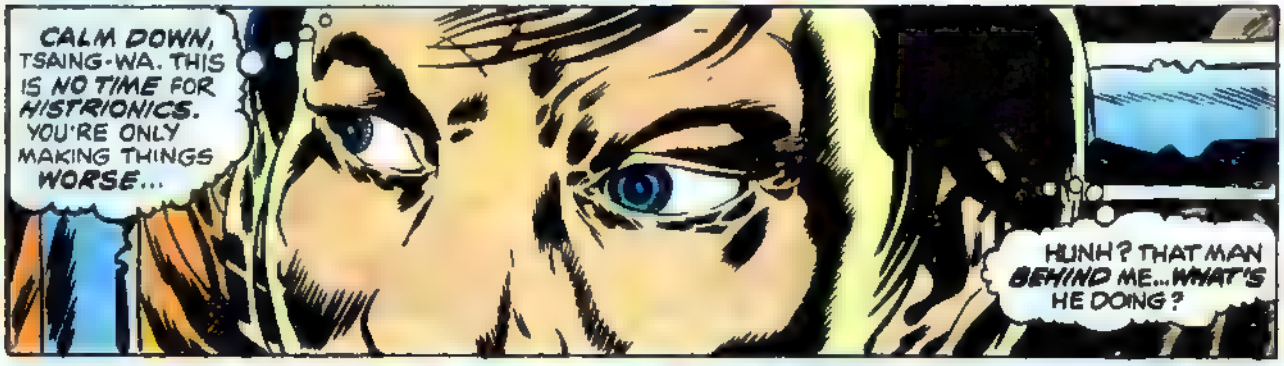

HOWEVER, ONE POLICE SPOKESMAN DID SAY THAT IT WAS OBVIOUSLY THE WORK OF ORGANIZED CRIME.
"ORGANIZED CRIME?" MAN, THAT'S RICH!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT. I JUST DON'T BELIEVE IT! WE TRAIN A FULL MONTH FOR THIS TOURNAMENT, FLY SEVEN HOURS ON A CROWDED JET TO GET HERE....
WE GET DAMN NEAR MURDERED THE MINUTE WE SET FOOT ON THE GROUND...
THE REST OF THE NIGHT IS SHOT COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK POLICE...
AND THE FIRST THING LIN DOES WHEN WE GET TO OUR HOTEL IS TURN THE T.V. ON..
AND WATCH IT HAPPEN ALL OVER AGAIN! MAN YOU'RE ... INCREDIBLE!
I JUST HAPPEN TO LIKE THE NEWS...
I GIVE UP. I'M GOIN' TO BED! GOOD MORNING!
THE TIME IS 8:03 AM AND HERE IS TODAY'S TOP STORY: CHINA'S DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, LEE TSAING-WA, AGAIN ATTACKED THE UNITED STATES, STATING THAT THE...
DISAPPEARANCE OF MY COUNTRY'S ENTIRE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IS AN ACT OF MONSTROUS INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM! THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HOLDS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR SAFE RECOVERY...
STRANGE...EVERY TIME I SEE LEE TSAING-WA, MY TIGER MEDALION...TINGLES...
NO...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. CHINA'S DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER--ONE OF THE SILENT ONES--AND YET...

WHY NOT LEE TSAING-WA? CORRUPTION IN HIGH PLACES SEEMS TO BE THE NORM THESE DAYS ...WHAT ARE THEY SAYING NOW?
...AN EMERGENCY SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS BEEN CALLED FOR 10 A.M. TODAY...
TEN A.M. NOT MUCH TIME...
ABE...BOB... WAKE UP!
I SAID, WAKE UP! WE'RE GOING TO THE UN.
SON OF A...
THANKS A LOT, BUDDY.
OKAY, THE MEDALLION'S CLUED YOU IN TO SOMETHIN' SCREWY GOIN' DOWN AT THE UN.
WHAT?!
I DON'T KNOW. THE MEDALLION DIDN'T GIVE ANY SPECIFICS, JUST AN... ITCH...
OHHH NO.
AN ITCH! YOU DROWNED ME OUTTA THE BEST DREAM I EVER HAD IN MY ENTIRE LIFE... FOR AN ITCH!!
COOL IT, BROTHER, WE'VE ARRIVED.
SONUVAGUN. I THOUGHT I'D SEEN TIGHT SECURITY IN MY TIME, BUT THIS...

NOW WHAT?
THERE! THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. WHATEVER HAPPENS TODAY WILL HAPPEN IN THERE.
FINE. ALL WE GOTTA DO NOW IS SCROUNGE SOME TICKETS!
WHERE D'YOU THINK YOU'RE GOIN', PUNK?
TO THE VISITOR'S GALLERY...
NO, YOU'RE NOT!
WE HAVE TICKETS...
TOO BAD, PUNK! THE GALLERY'S ALL TAKEN. YOU COME BACK SOME OTHER TIME, OKAY?
HEY! I HEARD THAT!
THERE ARE PLENTY OF SEATS LEFT, FELLAS. GO RIGHT IN. AN' IF THESE LUGS HASSLE YOU INSIDE, JUST GIVE A HOLLAR...
THE GREAT HALL IS PACKED--DELEGATES, NEWSPERSONS, GUARDS, SPECTATORS--AND YET, STRANGELY QUIET AS WELL. AS IF ALL PRESENT REALIZE, IF EVENTS DO NOT GO WELL IN THIS ROOM, MAN WILL BE AN EXTINCT SPECIES BEFORE THE WEEK IS OUT...
WE WISH TO GO IN...NOW.


PSSST! GET A LOAD OF THE HEAVIES IN THE BACK ROW. WHAT SEWER DID THEY CRAWL OUT OF?
SHHH!
I KNOW. I KNOW THE TYPE FROM 'WAY BACK: THEY'RE "MUSCLE," VERY HEAVY MUSCLE. YOU WATCH YOUR BACK, BROTHER.

AND I SAY THAT IF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT CANNOT GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF CHINESE DIPLOMATS IN AMERICA, THEN CHINA WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF AMERICANS IN CHINA...


CALM DOWN, TSAING-WA. THIS IS NO TIME FOR HISTRIONICS. YOU'RE ONLY MAKING THINGS WORSE...
HUNH? THAT MAN BEHIND ME... WHAT'S HE DOING?

HE'S THE ONE WHO DIDN'T WANT TO LET US IN...
AND HE'S BEEN FIDGETTING AND LOOKING AT HIS WATCH SINCE WE SAT DOWN...

THE MAN'S LOOKING IN MY DIRECTION... WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?!

LIN'S REVERIE IS SHATTERED IN MID-SENTENCE AS THE BEARDED LASCAR SPRINGS TO HIS FEET AND ELBOWS HIS WAY TO THE BALCONY RAIL...
ASSAULT GROUP A!
NOW!

HEAR ME, COMRADES! ATTACK IN THE NAME OF MAO-TSE-TUNG AND THE GLORIOUS CHINESE PEOPLE!
ATTACK! AND DESTROY THE WARMONGERING AMERICAN FASCISTS!
DO NOT MOVE, FOOLS! WE WILL NOT HESITATE TO KILL YOU!
ARE THESE GUYS FOR REAL? "WARMONGERING... FASCISTS?" HEY, LIN, THEY'RE HEADING FOR THE AMERICAN DELEGATION!
AND SO SHALL WE, ROBERT. BUT FIRST WE MUST DEAL WITH SOME SMALL PROBLEMS OF OUR OWN.

DEAL WITH THEM--
LIKE, SO!!
I TOLD YOU PUNKS TO....URRGH!
THINK SO?
HEY, BROTHER, THAT'S A GOOD MOVE!
MY MOM USES IT ALL THE TIME AGAINST THE LOCAL JUNKIES.

THAT TAKES CARE OF THE MEN GUARDING US...BUT MOST OF THE CADRE ARE AMONG THE DELEGATES...
SONS OF THE TIGER--

ATTACK!
FOOM!

THE TEAM MOVES WITH A FLUID, ALMOST CHOREOGRAPHED, GRACE...
LIN! THESE JOKERS SURE DON'T FIGHT LIKE THE USUAL SILENT ONES' GOON SQUAD...

YOU'RE TELLING ME!
HEY, FELLAS, IT'S GOTTEN AWFULLY CROWDED DOWN HERE ALL OF A SUDDEN...
HOW ABOUT SOME HELP!

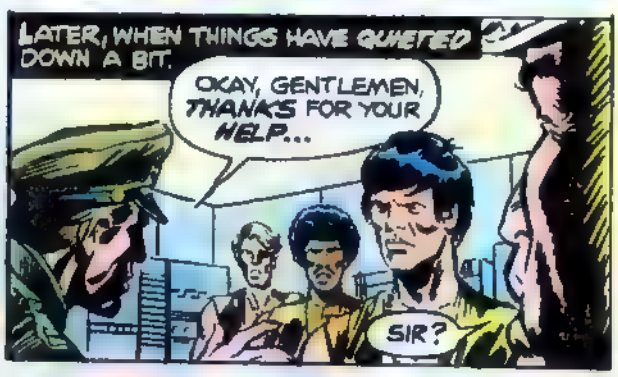
ALONE, EACH MEMBER OF THE TEAM IS A SUPERB, ALMOST UNBEATABLE MARTIAL ARTIST...
AS ONE, THEY'LL FIGHT THEIR WILL BE DONE...
FOR EACH IS BORN ANEW... THE TIGER'S SON!
WHEN THREE ARE CALLED AND STAND AS ONE...
BUT NOW, WITH THREE MASTERS FUNCTIONING AS ONE, THE SONS OF THE TIGER ARE DEADLY BEYOND BELIEF!
CHII-AH!
MARCEL! LOOK AT THEM! THAT INSANE TRIO IS DESTROYING OUR SI-FAN CADRE...
HOW COULD EVEN FU MANCH...
SILENCE, DOG! WE PLAY CHINESE AGENTS TODAY!
AND MENTION OUR MASTER'S NAME AGAIN AND I'LL STRANGLE YOU MYSELF!
IT'S A BRILLIANT PLAN, ONE WORTHY OF FU MANCHU...
SI-FAN AGENTS DISGUISED AS CHINESE DELEGATES KIDNAP THE AMERICAN UN DELEGATION. SUCH AN OPEN ATTACK COULD ONLY LEAD TO WAR.
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
THEN ALL ONE HAS TO DO IS SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR THE SUPER-POWERS TO DESTROY THEMSELVES...
KAII!
THIS IS CRAZY. THE CHINESE DELEGATES ARE FIGHTING US. WHAT'S...
FU MANCHU WILL RULE WHAT'S LEFT.
LIN! BOB! LOOK! THE U.S. DELEGATION'S BEING KIDNAPPED!
BEING KIDNAPPED BY CHINESE...
BUT THAT'S INSANE.... UNBELIEVABLE..

INSANE, LIN SUN? PERHAPS, BUT IT'S HAPPENING ANYWAY.
MOVE IT! MOVE IT! WE'RE BEHIND SCHEDULE!
KILL ANYONE WHO GETS IN OUR WAY!
THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!
THAT SO, BABE? OKAY, FELLA, PLAY-TIME'S OVER!
CHA-POW!
THOSE GUYS AREN'T GONNA GET FAR. THERE MUST BE HALF THE US ARMY WAITING OUT THERE FOR THEM BY NOW.
TRUE ENOUGH, BOB DIAMOND-- BEFORE THE ASSAULT. BUT THE MINUTES SINCE THEN HAVE BEEN A SWIRLING MAELSTORM OF CONFUSION, FEAR AND PANIC!
IT'S A NIGHTMARE. AND LIKE ANY NIGHTMARE, THE PEOPLE WHO GET HURT THE MOST ARE THE ONES WHO LEAST DESERVE IT. THE INNOCENT BYSTANDERS...
AND INTO THIS MESS CHARGE THE SONS OF THE TIGER...
WHERE'D THEY GO?

THERE!
HELICOPTERS! THEY HAD HELICOPTERS!
WE COULD HAVE STOPPED THEM IF WE'D GOTTEN OUT FASTER!
COOL OFF, LIN. WE DID OUR BEST.
AND FOR WHAT IT WAS WORTH, WE GOT MOST OF THEM. THAT SHOULD COUNT FOR SOMETHING....
SHOULD IT? I WONDER...
SIR. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU WERE NEARLY TRAMPLED BY THE CROWD; CAN I CALL A DOCTOR..

NO. NO, THANK YOU. I AM QUITE WELL. JUST A BIT SHAKEN UP IS ALL....
LOOK, I--WE--GOT SOME SPARE CHANGE. YOU LOOK LIKE YOU CAN USE IT.

THANK YOU, MY SON. YOU ARE MOST KIND. LIVE LONG, YOUNG SIRS, LIVE WELL..
WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE.


LATER, WHEN THINGS HAVE QUIETED DOWN A BIT.
OKAY, GENTLEMEN, THANKS FOR YOUR HELP...
SIR?

OH MY GOD, NO!!
THE CHINESE HAVE DELIVERED AN ULTIMATUM. THE PRESIDENT'S HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ORDER A GLOBAL WAR ALERT.
IF THE MISSING DELEGATES AREN'T FOUND BY MIDNIGHT TOMORROW...
ANYONE KNOW A GOOD PRAYER?

CHAPTER 3:

THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU

"NATURE CREATED THE WORLD TO BE *ONE* WITH ITSELF, THE *WATERS* NOURISHING THE *LAND*, THE AIR BREATHING UNIFORM LIFE TO THE *WHOLE* OF ITS SURFACE.

"BUT MAN *DIVIDED* THE WORLD WITH NONEXISTENT *BORDERS* SPLIT THE WHOLE INTO FRAGMENTED REGIONS CALLED *NATIONS*... AND THE WORLD *SUFFERED*.

"AND WHERE THE *WORLD* SUFFERED, *MAN* SUFFERED... AND *MAN DIED*, ATTEMPTING TO SHAPE HIS NATION INTO AN ENTITY GREATER THAN THE REST OF THE WORLD.

"BUT *SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH* HAS TOLD ME OF AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE *UNITED NATIONS*. ITS NAME IS *FALSE*, FOR IT DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO *UNITE* THE WORLD INTO A *WHOLE*... AND YET IT *DOES* ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE *SUFFERING* BY RESOLVING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WORLD'S DIVIDED REGIONS.

"AND NOW THE UNITED NATIONS *ITSELF* HAS BEEN DIVIDED...

KEEP YOUR CITY CLEAN

DAILY @ NEWS

U.N. DELEGATES KIDNAPPED

CHINESE AMERICANS TAKEN CAPTIVE

"FOR *THIS REASON*, I HAVE COME TO THE OFFICE BUILDING WHICH DISGUISES FU MANCHU'S *NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS*.

"I MUST *SPEAK* WITH MY FATHER, AND LEARN IF IT IS *HE* WHO HAS DIVIDED THE UNITED NATIONS... AND WISHES TO MAKE THE WORLD *SUFFER*.

TAP TAP

OOPS. SORRY, I DIDN'T *MEAN* TO TAP YOUR *FOOT*...

TUD

BUT CAN YOU SPARE A *DIME* FOR A *BLIND* MAN?

I HAVE NO... *MONEY*.

I AM *SORRY*...

NO *NEED* TO BE *SORRY*.

AND THANKS *ANYWAY*, SON. HAVE A *GOOD DAY*.

DOUG MOENCH: SCRIPT/MIKE VOSBURG & DAN ADKINS: ART/PHIL RACHELSON: COLORS

"A LIMOUSINE EMERGING FROM MY FATHER'S HEADQUARTERS...
"...FOLLOWED BY A SECOND ONE.
TEMPLE GARAGE
"THE WINDOWS OF BOTH ARE DARKENED.
"I WOULD LEARN WHY.
"THE LIMOUSINES HAVE HALTED AT THE DOCKS, AND ROBED MEN HAVE DEBARKED... TO DRIVE OTHER MEN AS IF THEY WERE OXEN.
HURRY IT UP-- ONTO THE PIER!
"THE KIDNAPPED DELEGATES... BOTH AMERICAN AND CHINESE.
"THEY ARE BEING FORCED FROM THE PIER DOWN TO A--
"--SUB-MARINE?
QUICKLY-- BEFORE THE COAST GUARD DECIDES TO START EARNING ITS SALARY BY OPENING THEIR EYES.

"I MUST ALSO BOARD THIS SUBMARINE.
"SECRETLY.
SHHHH!
COME ON-- YOU'RE THE LAST ONE.
WHAT'S TAKING YOU SO LONG?
DON'T FORGET TO FASTEN THAT HATCH BEHIND YOU!
"MY HANDS PRETEND THAT MY EARS ARE DEAF.
"I LISTEN...
NOW, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO TAKE THE SUB OUT TO THIS POINT JUST BEYOND THE EIGHT-MILE LIMIT INTO INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND WAIT.
SOUNDS SIMPLE ENOUGH... EXCEPT FOR THESE STUPID ROBES.
RELAX. THIS FU MANCHU DUDE WANTS US TO LOOK LIKE HIS SI-FAN CHARACTERS-- AND HE'S PAYIN' US PLENTY ENOUGH TO OPERATE THIS SUB SO WE DON'T ASK QUESTIONS.
BESIDES, IT MAKES SENSE TO DISGUISE OURSELVES. NO ONE CAN SQUEAL ON ANYONE ELSE IF HE'S CAUGHT...
... AND THE U.N. DELEGATES'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY US.
SO HOW CAN WEARIN' THE ROBES HURT?

"THE SUBMARINE HAS REACHED ITS DESTINATION... AND SURFACED TO FIND A WAITING FREIGHTER.
"BUT WHAT APPEARS TO BE A COMMON VESSEL...
"... IS REVEALED TO HOST A MOST UNCOMMON PASSENGER.
YOU HAVE DONE WELL.
AND FU MANCHU--
--SHALL RICHLY REWARD YOU...
BUT NOT UNTIL YOU HAVE HOISTED THE CAPTIVE DELEGATES ABOARD THIS FREIGHTER.
FOR IT IS ONLY BY HOLDING BOTH AMERICAN--
-- AND CHINESE DELEGATES--
--HOSTAGE. HERE ON THIS FREIGHTER BEYOND THE JURISDICTION OF ANY NATION ..
... THAT WE MAY PLAY ONE NATION AGAINST THE OTHER.
AND NOW YOU WILL AGAIN SUBMERGE. REMAIN IN THIS VICINITY...
...UNTIL I ADVISE YOU FURTHER.
"I HAD HOPED THESE MEN WERE TO BOARD THE FREIGHTER, AND REMAIN WITH THE DELEGATES...
"...BUT NOW, TRAPPED IN THIS VESSEL BENEATH THE SEA, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO FREE MY FATHER'S HOSTAGES.

"UNLESS...
TORPEDO A
AUTHORIZE
"THESE TUBES...
"...USED FOR THE EJECTION OF EXPLOSIVE PROJECTILES..."
pfah.
THIS IS WHAT THEY SEND AGAINST FU MANCHU?
I HAD EXPECTED BETTER OF SMITH AND HIS AGENTS...
COME IN, SHARK COMMANDER TWO--!
THIS IS VIPER LEADER ONE.
YOU WILL FIND A SMALL CRUISER IN YOUR PERISCOPE...
I WISH YOU TO DESTROY IT AT ONCE.
TORPEDO CHAMBER
THE TORPEDO'S ALREADY BEEN PRIMED... AND READY TO--
--FIRE.
T'EK

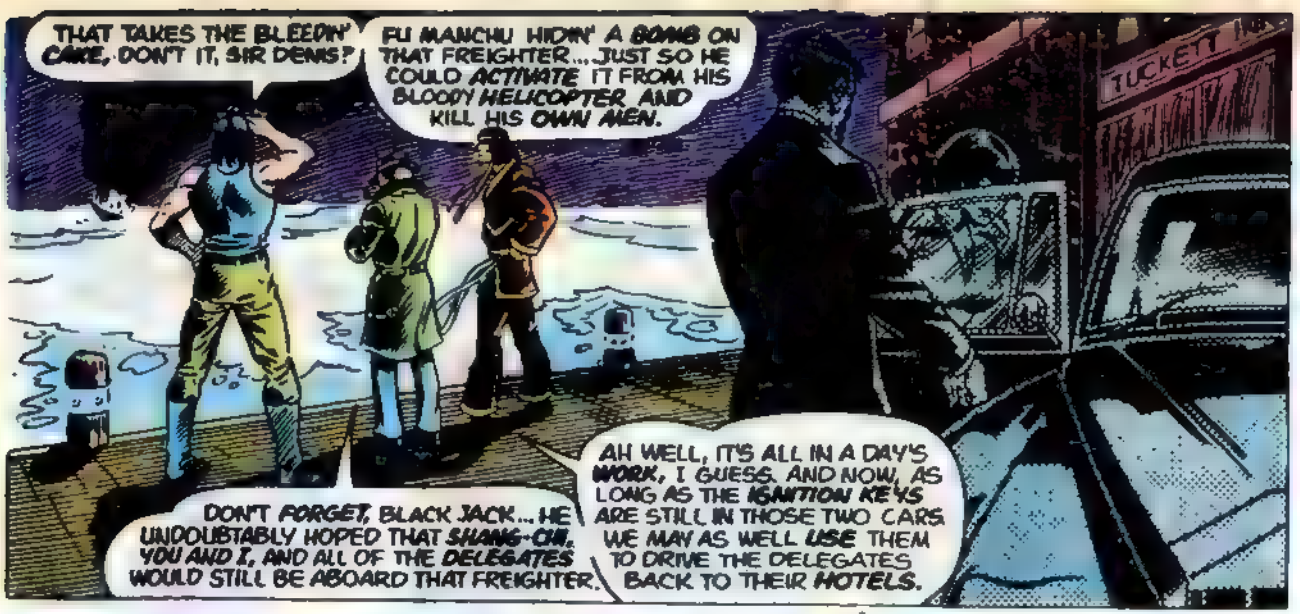
"THEY HAVE RELEASED THE TORPEDO.
"I AM FREE.
VROOSH
SHOULD BE HITTING JUST ABOUT..
...NOW!
HUH--?!
NOTHING'S HAPPENING.
THE CRUISER'S STILL COMING!!
FOOLS!!
YOU'VE FORGOTTEN TO PRIME THE TORPEDO!
NO-- IT LEFT THE CHAMBER. THEN IT MUST'VE BEEN DEFECTIVE.
BETTER LOAD ANOTHER ONE INTO--
NO--?!!
SOMEBODY DEFUSED EVERY LAST TORPEDO ABOARD SHIP--!
BUT WHO?
WHO--?!!
"I BREAK THE SURFACE TO GREET WELCOMED AIR. THE FREIGHTER IS NEAR..."

AGAIN MY PLANS HAVE BEEN FOULED BY INTERFERENCE.
SELECT TWO DELEGATES FROM EACH NATION--QUICKLY!
MY HELICOPTER WILL NOT ACCOMMODATE A GREATER NUMBER... NOR WILL ANY MORE THAN THESE FOUR BE NECESSARY.
THIS IS AN OUTRAGE--!
PRECISELY, MR. DELEGATE. THE AUTHORITIES IN YOUR PRECIOUS AMERICA WILL BE GREATLY OUTRAGED...
... WHEN THEY CONCLUDE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED BY CHINESE AGENTS.
AND YOUR FELLOW DELEGATES' COMRADES IN CHINA--
--WILL BE SIMILARLY OUTRAGED...
...AND ONLY TOO EAGER TO PLACE THE BLAME ON THE IMPERIALIST AMERICANS.
AND IN THIS MANNER, I--
WHO--?!
SHANG-CHI--?!
STOP HIM--!!
"MY FATHER'S SCHEME OF PITTING TWO NATIONS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER IS SURPASSED IN TERMS OF EVIL ONLY BY--
"--HIS SCHEME OF PITTING TWO MEN AT ONE ANOTHER'S THROATS.
CHUD!
UNFFF!!
THE REST OF YOU--WHERE ARE YOU?! STOP HIM!!

"MY FEET STRIKE THE FREIGHTER'S DECK...
"...AND I LEAP FORWARD...
THUD
"...TO GREET MY FATHER'S CULT OF SI-FAN ASSASSINS.
WUMP
"AND WHEN I HAVE DEFEATED THE LAST ONE...
"THERE ARE MORE.
"THE ONES FROM THE SUB-MARINE... WITHOUT THEIR ROBES.

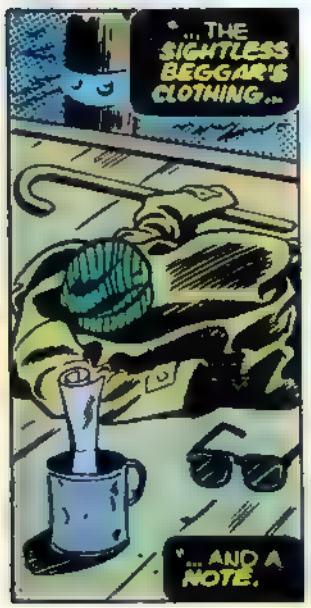
SWOK
KWAK
BUNT
"I DID NOT SEE--
HUG
PREPARE TO DIE, DOG-SON OF FU MANCHU.
"...THIS SI-FAN WHO HAS REVIVED...
SHLAUK
"...MOMENTARILY.
"THERE ARE BUT TWO NOW.
"ONE.
SPOW
"AND NONE.
KKOP
"BUT MY FATHER--
"--HAS ESCAPED.
SHANG-CHI!!

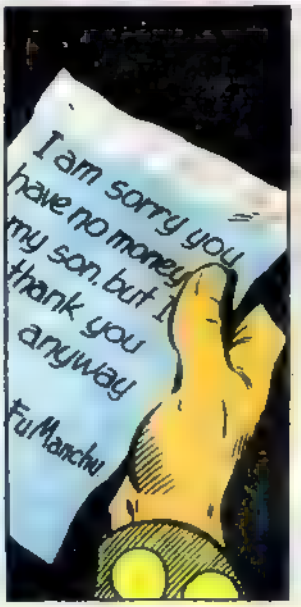
"IT IS BLACK JACK TARR -- SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH'S CHIEF AIDE-de-CAMP.
UP TO YOUR NECK IN MORE TROUBLE, EH CHINAMAN?
"AND SMITH HIMSELF.
WE GOT HERE AS FAST AS THAT JUNKYARD CRUISER WOULD CARRY US. THE COAST GUARD WOULDN'T LET US TAKE ONE OF THEIR CRAFT OUT BEYOND THE NAUTICAL LIMITS...
... AND AS A RESULT, FU MANCHU HAS ESCAPED AGAIN.
BLAST THAT INSIDIOUS FIEND!
BUT AT LEAST HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO TAKE ANY OF THE DELEGATES WITH HIM.
AND SINCE THEY'RE OUR FIRST CONSIDERATION--
-- WE'D BETTER GET THEM SAFELY ASHORE.
WE CAN COME BACK FOR THE SI-FAN LATER. THANKS TO YOU, SHANG-CHI, THEY'RE UNCONSCIOUS... AND IT'S NOT LIKELY THEY'LL BE GOING ANYWH---
WHOOM!


THAT TAKES THE BLEEDIN' CAKE, DON'T IT, SIR DENIS?
FU MANCHU HIDIN' A BOMB ON THAT FREIGHTER... JUST SO HE COULD ACTIVATE IT FROM HIS BLOODY HELICOPTER AND KILL HIS OWN MEN.
TICKET
AH WELL, IT'S ALL IN A DAY'S WORK, I GUESS. AND NOW, AS LONG AS THE IGNITION KEYS ARE STILL IN THOSE TWO CARS WE MAY AS WELL USE THEM TO DRIVE THE DELEGATES BACK TO THEIR HOTELS.
DON'T FORGET, BLACK JACK... HE UNDOUBTABLY HOPED THAT SHANG-CHI, YOU AND I, AND ALL OF THE DELEGATES WOULD STILL BE ABOARD THAT FREIGHTER.

GOOD-BYE, LAD. WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOON, I'M SURE.

"...?!
"ON THE DOCKS... BEYOND WHERE THE LIMOUSINES HAD RESTED...
HANDLE WITH CARE


"... THE SIGHTLESS BEGGAR'S CLOTHING...
"... AND A NOTE.


I am sorry you have no money my son, but I thank you anyway
fu Manchu

"MY FATHER... PASSED WITHIN THE REACH OF MY ARM... TO DEMONSTRATE THAT EVEN THE SON OF FU MANCHU--
"--MAY BE BLIND.

EPILOG:

YOU ARE IRON FIST AND YOU SELDOM SMILE. BUT THIS EVE, YOU DO SMILE AS YOU READ A NEWSPAPER BLOWN YOUR WAY BY A CHANCE OF WIND.

DAILY NEWS
U.N DELEGATES ARE FREE
WHEREABOUTS OF MYSTERIOUS RESCUERS STILL UNKNOWN

IT SEEMS THERE IS SOME JUSTICE IN THE WORLD AFTER ALL.

FIRST PHOTOS OF RESCUED DELEGATES

SO YOU TURN AND PUT THOUGHTS OF YOUR RECENT DEFEAT WELL BEHIND YOU. YOU TURN AND WALK TOWARDS TOMORROW.

THE CHANCE OF WIND CARRIES THE DISCARDED PAPER DOWN THE NIGHT-SILENT STREETS OF MANHATTAN...

AND PAST THREE MEN WITH WHOM YOU HAVE UNKNOWINGLY SHARED AN ADVENTURE AND A CAUSE.

SO THAT'S IT, HUH?

IT LOOKS LIKE IT BROTHER. WE GET OUR TAILS SPANKED BECAUSE WE "INTERFERED" WITH UN SECURITY--

--AND SOME MYSTERY MEN COME FROM LEFT FIELD TO SAVE THE DELEGATES. I WONDER WHO THOSE GUYS WERE?

DOES IT MATTER? ISN'T IT ENOUGH THAT WHEN THERE WAS A NEED, THERE WERE GOOD MEN AVAILABLE TO FILL THAT NEED?

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, LIN. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE ME ANY OF THAT PHILOSOPHY STUFF ABOUT HOW WE PLAYED OUT OUR ASSIGNED ROLES, ARE YOU?

THE PLAIN FACT IS: WE BLEW IT! ALL WE DID WAS BUST UP SOME FURNITURE AND SOME THIRD-RATE ASSASSINS!

SO DON'T TRY TO CON ME WITH THAT STUFF, CHECK?

ACTUALLY, ALL I WAS GOING TO DO WAS SUGGEST WE GO OUT AND GET A STEAK.

FIN

TONY ISABELLA : SCRIPT | JOHN BUSCEMA : ART | PHIL RACHELSON: COLORS

THE CELESTIAL DESTINY OF THE MANDARIN FU MANCHU EXEMPLIFIES THE ETERNAL TRUTH OF T'AI CHI... WHOSE COMMON DEFICTION OCCURS IN THE SYMBOLS YIN AND YANG. I HAVE BEEN PERPETUALLY OPPOSED...
...FIRST, BY THE IGNORANCE OF MY COUNTRYMEN.. THEN, BY SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH AND THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS.. THEN, BY THE COMMUNISTS...
...NOW, BY THE FLESH OF MY FLESH-- MY SON.
I NAMED HIM SHANG-CHI... "THE RISING AND ADVANCING OF A SPIRIT." HE WAS TO HAVE BEEN MY SWORD, TEMPERED FOR USE AGAINST MY ENEMIES...
...BUT HE CHOSE THE PATH OF PEACE.
WITH BARELY NINETEEN YEARS, HE IS TOO YOUNG TO KNOW...
...THIS PATH DOES NOT EXIST.
HELP!
HELP ME, MISTER! MY HUSBAND'S BEING ROBBED!
I SEE YOU KNOW THE MARTIAL ARTS! THEN, QUICK--I NEED YOU!
PLEASE!

SHANG-CHI
MASTER OF
KUNG FU
By STEVE ENGLEHART, Author
ALAN LEE WEISS, Artist
AL MILGROM Inks
AL WENZEL Colors
I HEAR NOTHING, MISS PERHAPS THE THIEVES HAVE FLED...
...OR PERHAPS THE MENACE OF THIS SHADOWED CUL-DE-SAC IS OF A MORE INTRICATE BIRTH.
TO ONE AS CONCERNED WITH SHANG-CHI AS I, HIS INNERMOST THOUGHTS AT THIS MOMENT ARE LIKE THE TRACKS OF A PHEASANT ON THE NEW-FALLEN SNOW.

"TWO MEN AWAIT ME -- BOTH OF GREAT SIZE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MISTER? DO I LOOK LIKE THE KIND OF GIRL --
RUN!
ARRGH!
PLOW!
UNNHH!
"I WONDER: DID THEY VALUE THEIR SIZE?
"-- BUT I DO NOT REST MY BELIEF WITH HER. SHE WAS A JUDAS-GOAT -- ONE WHICH LEADS ITS FELLOWS TO THE AX! AND THE IDENTITY OF THE AX-WIELDER IS AS WELL KNOWN TO ME AS THAT OF MY FATHER, FOR THEY ARE THE SAME.
"MY EARS DETECT NO THIRD ASSAILANT.
"THE WOMAN IS WIDE-EYED, HAND TO MOUTH --
"------

WOM!
"THE SCENT OF HIS BEARD-OIL!
JUMP!
"I WAS NEARLY TAKEN, THEN THE BLACK WAS GOOD--
"--BUT HE APPEARS TO HAVE SPENT LITTLE TIME IN DEVELOPING SKILL WITH THE FALL.
"NOW ONE OF THE ORIGINAL PAIR LUMBERS TO HIS FEET--
"--AND SPEAKS.
YOU GOT GOOD EARS, SHANG-CHI. GOOD MOVES, TOO.
BUT I GOT POWER!
"MY NOSE NOW TELLS ME OF ROAST DUCK AND WHISKEY--
"--AS I FREE MYSELF
HEY! NO--
--FOOMP!
BAM!

"NONE OF THESE MEN FELL WELL. IT IS AS IF THEY WERE TRAINED SOLELY FOR ATTACK--
"-- WHICH FORGES A VERY BRITTLE WEAPON.

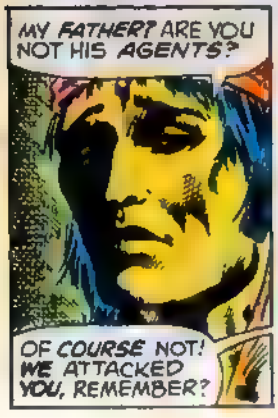
YOU'RE QUITE SURE OF YOURSELF, AREN'T YOU, SON OF FU MANCHU?
"SO!
"THE WOMAN ABANDONS HER POSE TO REQUIRE SUCH DESPERATE MEASURES..

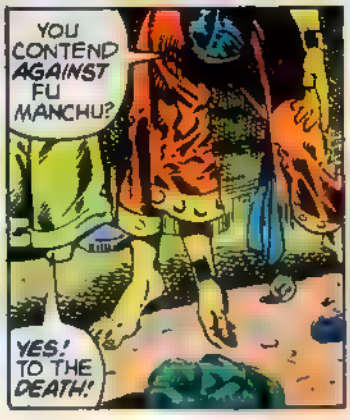
"--I MUST BE CONSIDERED A VALUABLE PRIZE!
HAI-YA!
"I WITH-DRAW. SHE TENSES FOR A SIDE-SWEEPING KICK.
"I LEAP.

"I LAND, REACHING FOR A NERVE IN HER NECK...
"EH?

"SHE JERKS AWAY, AND REVEALS...
"--A FACE OF FRAGMENTS AND PAIN!

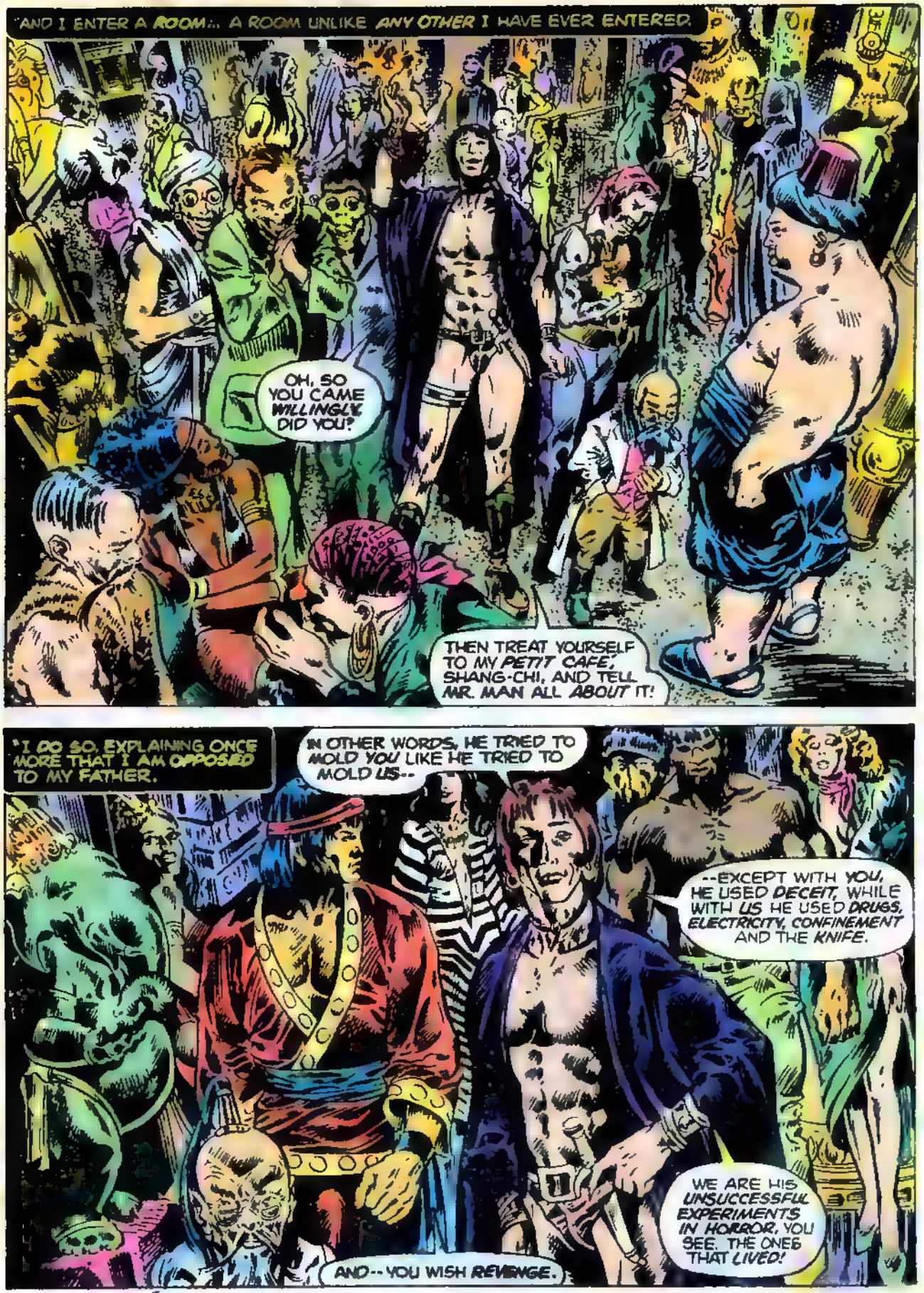
"--PAIN WHICH I SUFFER AS KEENLY AS SHE.
DAMN YOU! DAMN YOU! NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR FATHER CAN LEAVE ME IL-LUSIONS!

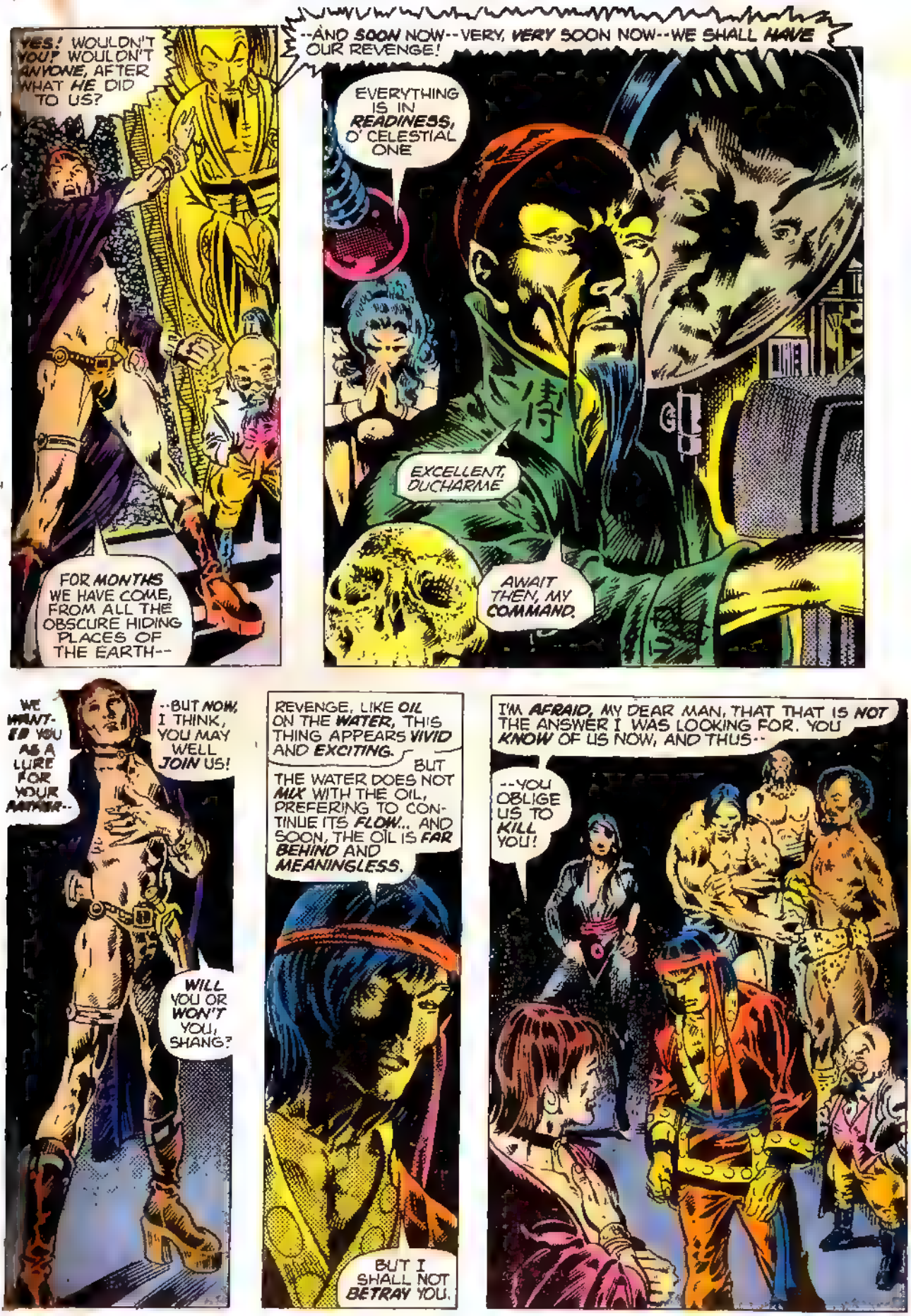

MY FATHER? ARE YOU NOT HIS AGENTS?
OF COURSE NOT! WE ATTACKED YOU, REMEMBER?


YOU CONTEND AGAINST FU MANCHU?
YES! TO THE DEATH!

HERE IS YOUR HAT I SHALL GO WITH YOU

"THE THERE MEN SOON REVIVE UNDER MY MINISTRATIONS, AND WE WALK BACK THROUGH NEW YORK'S "CHINATOWN"...
"...BUT THEIR EYES QUEST EVERYWHERE, AS THOUGH THEY ARE NOW TRAPPED...
"...AND WHENEVER THEY PEER AT ME, THE MEN YET SEE MY FATHER.
"STILL, THEY SAY NOTHING, UNTIL WE REACH CANAL STREET. AND THEN ONLY--
A SPY DIES THE LEAST ENDURABLE OF DEATHS, SHANG-CHI
KUNG FU · KA
AIKIDO · TAI CHI · JUDO
WINGED DRAGONS
HE WILL NOT BETRAY US, TSAA! I TRUST HIM!
I SHALL NOT BETRAY YOU.
"ONCE PAST THE ANCIENT, SOOT-STAINED DOORS, I FIND A MODERN... 'KARATE SCHOOL', THE AMERICANS CALL IT...
"THIS SUDDEN FAD OF FOREIGN VIOLENCE, WITH LITTLE REGARD FOR FOREIGN PHILOSOPHY, SADDENS ME...
"...BUT IT IS NOT WHAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE BROUGHT ME HERE TO SEE.
IN HERE.


"AND I ENTER A ROOM... A ROOM UNLIKE ANY OTHER I HAVE EVER ENTERED.
OH, SO YOU CAME WILLINGLY, DID YOU?
THEN TREAT YOURSELF TO MY PETIT CAFE', SHANG-CHI, AND TELL MR. MAN ALL ABOUT IT!
"I DO SO. EXPLAINING ONCE MORE THAT I AM OPPOSED TO MY FATHER.
IN OTHER WORDS, HE TRIED TO MOLD YOU LIKE HE TRIED TO MOLD US--
--EXCEPT WITH YOU, HE USED DECEIT, WHILE WITH US HE USED DRUGS, ELECTRICITY, CONFINEMENT AND THE KNIFE.
WE ARE HIS UNSUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENTS IN HORROR, YOU SEE. THE ONES THAT LIVED!
AND--YOU WISH REVENGE.


YES! WOULDN'T YOU? WOULDN'T ANYONE, AFTER WHAT HE DID TO US?
FOR MONTHS WE HAVE COME, FROM ALL THE OBSCURE HIDING PLACES OF THE EARTH--
--AND SOON NOW--VERY, VERY SOON NOW--WE SHALL HAVE OUR REVENGE!
EVERYTHING IS IN READINESS, O' CELESTIAL ONE
EXCELLENT, DUCHARME
AWAIT THEN, MY COMMAND.
WE WANTED YOU AS A LURE FOR YOUR FATHER--
--BUT NOW, I THINK, YOU MAY WELL JOIN US!
WILL YOU OR WON'T YOU, SHANG?
REVENGE, LIKE OIL ON THE WATER, THIS THING APPEARS VIVID AND EXCITING.
BUT THE WATER DOES NOT MIX WITH THE OIL, PREFERING TO CONTINUE ITS FLOW... AND SOON, THE OIL IS FAR BEHIND AND MEANINGLESS.
BUT I SHALL NOT BETRAY YOU.
I'M AFRAID, MY DEAR MAN, THAT THAT IS NOT THE ANSWER I WAS LOOKING FOR. YOU KNOW OF US NOW, AND THUS--
--YOU OBLIGE US TO KILL YOU!

"THE WILLFULNESS OF HIS WORDS STRIKES ME AS WOULD A FIST! IN NO MANNER IS HE OBLIGED TO KILL ME!
"I HAVE SAID ON TWO OCCASIONS (ALTHOUGH ONLY ONCE WITHIN HIS HEARING):-
"YET, WE SHALL CONTEND. A PITY. I FEEL KINSHIP TO THESE PEOPLE
"THEY, TOO, HAD SO MANY FRAGILE POSSIBILITIES DESTROYED BY MY FATHER'S EXPLOITATION.
"BUT I MUST TURN AND FACE THESE THREE MEN NOW.
"THEY ARE PREPARED TO ATTACK.

AND SO IT BEGINS.
HUNH!
SZZZZZZZZ
POK!
SZZP!
CLANG!
KRAK

"THE MAN RELIES TOO MUCH UPON HIS SWORD.
"THERE IS ONLY ONE WEAPON A HUMAN ALWAYS HAS--
"--AND THAT IS HIS OR HER OWN BODY.
"TRAINED PROPERLY--
POG!
"--IT IS THE ONLY WEAPON NEEDED.
"BUT, HOW SAD--
"-- THAT IT IS NEEDED.
"I KNOW SO LITTLE OF THE WORLD--
"--YET, THAT LESSON IS TAUGHT ME OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
"I GIVE THANKS THAT AMONG THE OTHER TREASURES OF MY SMALL KNOWLEDGE--
"-- I HAVE LEARNED TO SHUN THE WAYS OF VIOLENCE--

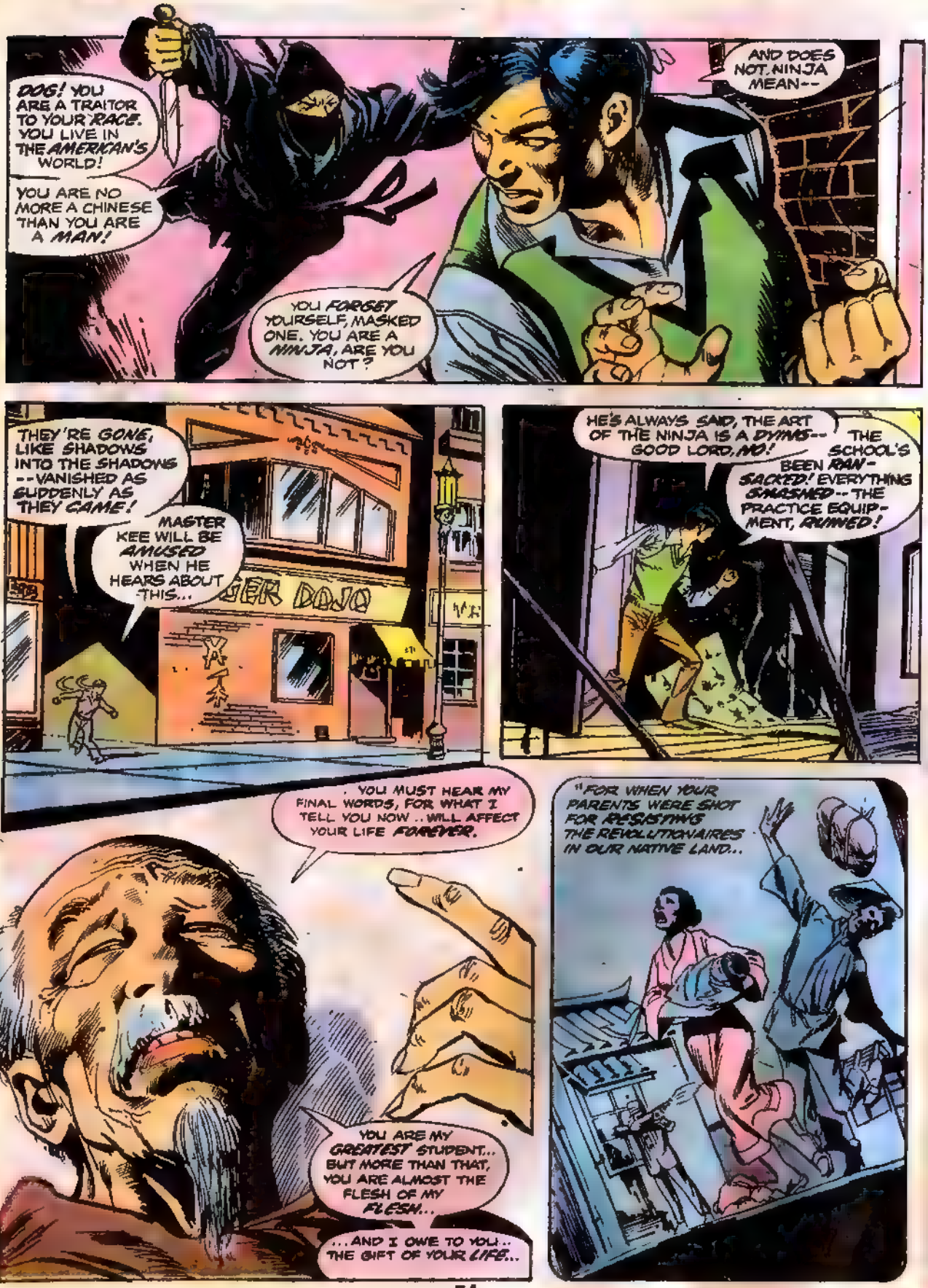
"--AND USE NO MORE THAN NECESSARY FORCE.
WUP!
AIEEE!
I TAKE YOUR FOUL CARCASS AND--
WHAT--? THIS IS JUST--HIS COAT!
POW!
BAM!
TOK!
TUMP!
WILL YOU NOT END IT NOW?
EVERYONE--
ATTACK!

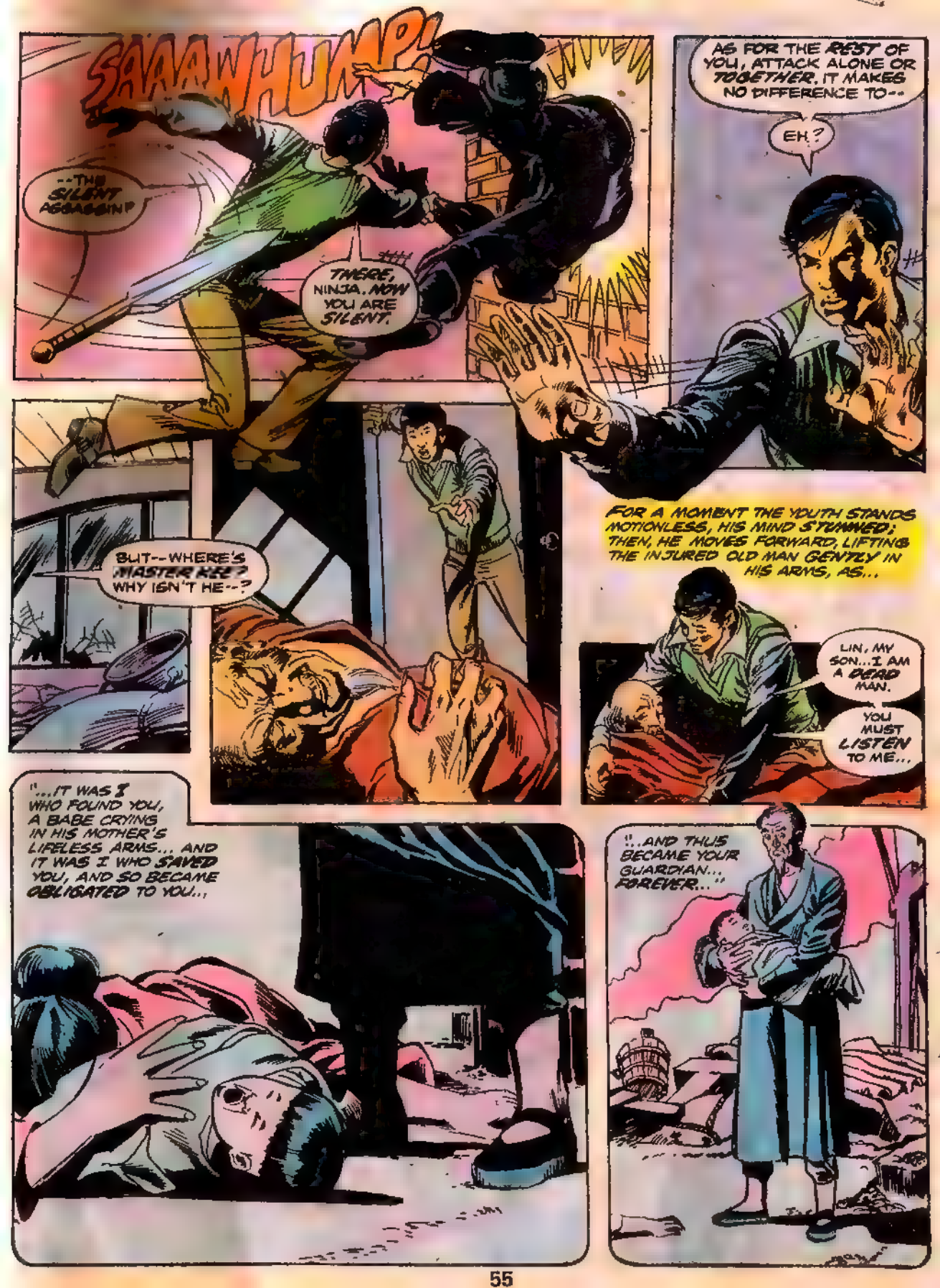
"THE MOVEMENTS OF MY OWN BODY BECOME NEARLY A BLUR. FROM ALL SIDES, BEINGS OF EVERY SHAPE AND SIZE CLAMBER TOWARD ME, THEIR ONLY SIMILARITIES A VESTIGE OF HUMAN APPEARANCE-- AND AN INHUMAN HATRED FOR ME.
"I FLOW TOWARD THEM AND THROUGH THEM--
"--STRIKING AND STRIKING AND STRIKING!
HAI-YA!
CLUD!
STOK!
BUNK!
WAM!
SAVE ME, GREGOR!
DON'T LET HIM TOUCH ME!
HE SHALL NOT PASS, LEADER

KA POW
KA-POW
GREGOR! HE'S ---
FWAM!
NOW, MR. MAN--
--NOW, I CAN TAKE YOUR LIFE WITH ONE SWIFT BLOW--IN ANY ONE OF MANY MANNERS!
BUT TO DO SO WOULD BE THE ACT OF A MADMAN... AND I AM NOT MAD.
I PREFER TO TAKE YOUR TRUST.
"THE TEMPLE GROWS STILL..."

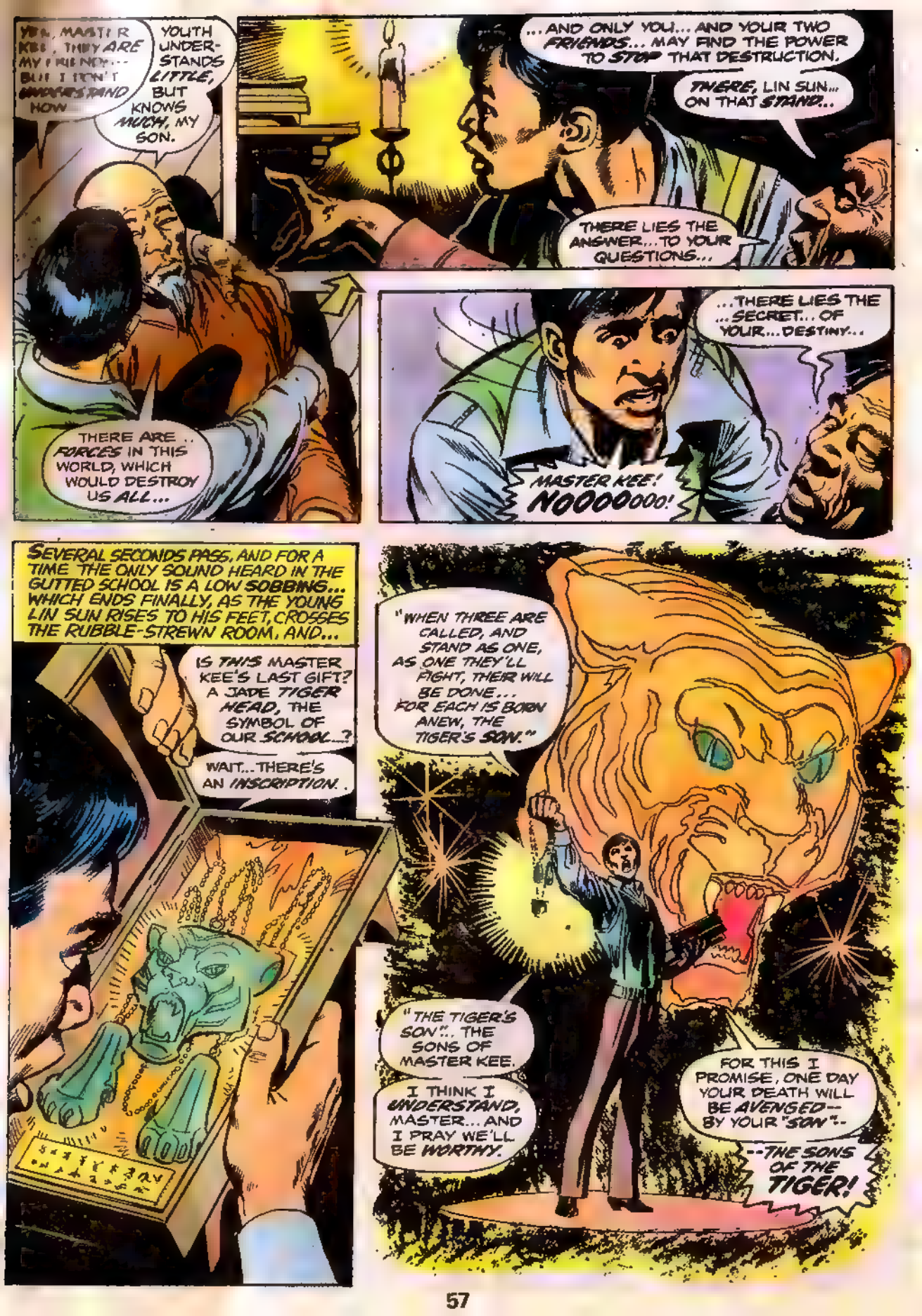
"--AND WITHIN THREE MINUTES--
I--AM SORRY, SHANG-CHI. RIDING THIS WAY--WE SAW EVERYONE AS EITHER WITH US OR AGAINST US.
GO-- AND GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR QUEST!
I HAVE BELIEVED IN YOU SINCE YOU GAVE ME MY HAT, SHANG-CHI.
THIS TIME, I GIVE YOU YOUR JACKET--AND A PLEA THAT WE MEET AGAIN SOME DAY.
"AHH. EARLIER, I CONTENDED FOR MY FREEDOM--
"--YET NOW, THE LEAVING OF THESE PEOPLE HAS BECOME EVEN MORE DIFFICULT.
NOW.
KA-ROOM!!
"THAT--COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY--
"--MY FATHER!
"TO DESTROY HIS FOES--
"--HE WAITED-- UNTIL I WAS CLEAR--
"--TO FLAUNT HIS POWER BEFORE ME! TO TAUNT ME!"
MY SON WILL HAVE MUCH TO CONTEMPLATE THIS EVE!
THE PIPE, DUCHARME!

BALMY SPRING WINDS CARRY A SCENT OF MOISTURE FROM THE WATERS OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY, TOUCHING HERE AND THERE AMONG THE SEVEN HILLS OF THIS CITY...
...TOUCHING THE STREETS AND WALKS OF CHINATOWN...
...TOUCHING ONE PARTICULAR YOUTH, RETURNING HOME FROM AN EVENINGS SPORT, CARRYING A TROPHY THAT BEARS WITNESS TO HIS PROWESS...
...A PROWESS HE'LL SOON HAVE TO PROVE!
SWISH!
NINJAS!
PRESENTING: The SENSES-STUNNING ORIGIN SAGA OF THE FIGHTING TEAM CALLED--
THE SONS OF THE TIGER!
KRAK!
ASSASSINS! THIS IS THE SECOND NIGHT YOU'VE ATTACKED ME OUTSIDE MY SCHOOL...
THIS NIGHT WILL BE THE LAST!
KRUNCH!
GERRY CONWAY * AUTHOR
DICK GIORDANO * ARTIST
MICHELE WOLFMAN * COLORS
ROY THOMAS * EDITOR & ADVISOR


DOG! YOU ARE A TRAITOR TO YOUR RACE. YOU LIVE IN THE AMERICAN'S WORLD!
YOU ARE NO MORE A CHINESE THAN YOU ARE A MAN!
AND DOES NOT NINJA MEAN--
YOU FORGET YOURSELF, MASKED ONE. YOU ARE A NINJA, ARE YOU NOT?
THEY'RE GONE, LIKE SHADOWS INTO THE SHADOWS --VANISHED AS SUDDENLY AS THEY CAME!
MASTER KEE WILL BE AMUSED WHEN HE HEARS ABOUT THIS...
HE'S ALWAYS SAID, THE ART OF THE NINJA IS A DYING-- GOOD LORD, NO!
THE SCHOOL'S BEEN RANSACKED! EVERYTHING SMASHED-- THE PRACTICE EQUIPMENT, RUINED!
. YOU MUST HEAR MY FINAL WORDS, FOR WHAT I TELL YOU NOW .. WILL AFFECT YOUR LIFE FOREVER.
YOU ARE MY GREATEST STUDENT... BUT MORE THAN THAT, YOU ARE ALMOST THE FLESH OF MY FLESH...
...AND I OWE TO YOU.. THE GIFT OF YOUR LIFE...
"FOR WHEN YOUR PARENTS WERE SHOT FOR RESISTING THE REVOLUTIONAIRES IN OUR NATIVE LAND...


SAAAWHUMP!
--THE SILENT ASSASSIN?
THERE, NINJA. NOW YOU ARE SILENT.
AS FOR THE REST OF YOU, ATTACK ALONE OR TOGETHER, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO--
EH?
BUT--WHERE'S MASTER KEE? WHY ISN'T HE--?
FOR A MOMENT THE YOUTH STANDS MOTIONLESS, HIS MIND STUNNED; THEN, HE MOVES FORWARD, LIFTING THE INJURED OLD MAN GENTLY IN HIS ARMS, AS...
LIN, MY SON...I AM A DEAD MAN.
YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME...
"...IT WAS I WHO FOUND YOU, A BABE CRYING IN HIS MOTHER'S LIFELESS ARMS... AND IT WAS I WHO SAVED YOU, AND SO BECAME OBLIGATED TO YOU...
"...AND THUS BECAME YOUR GUARDIAN... FOREVER..."

MASTER KEE, I KNOW THIS... THERE IS NO NEED TO...
BUT THERE IS, LIN..
"...MORE NEED THAN YOU KNOW. I HAVE ONE LAST GIFT FOR YOU, BUT TO UNDERSTAND IT, YOU MUST REMEMBER, YOU MUST LET YOUR THOUGHTS GO BACK...
"YOU REMEMBER HOW WE CAME TO AMERICA, MY SON...AND HOW I TAUGHT YOU THE ARTS OF THE ANCIENTS...
"YOU LEARNED WELL, LIN SUN...YOU WERE QUICK, BRIGHT...THE BEST OF THE PUPILS I TOOK IN...
"ONLY TWO OTHERS RIVAL YOUR TALENTS, AND THEY ARE NEITHER OF THEM OF OUR RACE... YOU KNOW THEM, LIN SUN, THEY ARE YOUR FRIENDS...YOUR ONLY FRIENDS...
"ABE BROWN IS ONE, A FIERCE YOUNG MAN FROM THIS CITY'S OTHER GHETTO...
"ROBERT DIAMOND IS THE SECOND, THE YOUNG ACTOR WHO CAME TO 'PICK UP A FEW TRICKS' BECAUSE THE MARTIAL ARTS WERE BECOMING POPULAR IN THE AMERICAN CINEMA...
"...AND WHO STAYED AS HE LEARNED TO RESPECT KUNG FU... AND ALSO RESPECT HIMSELF."


YES, MASTER KEE, THEY ARE MY FRIENDS... BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW...
YOUTH UNDERSTANDS LITTLE, BUT KNOWS MUCH, MY SON.
THERE ARE... FORCES IN THIS WORLD, WHICH WOULD DESTROY US ALL...
...AND ONLY YOU!... AND YOUR TWO FRIENDS... MAY FIND THE POWER TO STOP THAT DESTRUCTION.
THERE, LIN SUN... ON THAT STAND...
THERE LIES THE ANSWER... TO YOUR QUESTIONS...
...THERE LIES THE ...SECRET... OF YOUR... DESTINY...
MASTER KEE! NOOOOOOO!
SEVERAL SECONDS PASS, AND FOR A TIME THE ONLY SOUND HEARD IN THE GUTTED SCHOOL IS A LOW SOBBING... WHICH ENDS FINALLY, AS THE YOUNG LIN SUN RISES TO HIS FEET, CROSSES THE RUBBLE-STREWN ROOM, AND...
IS THIS MASTER KEE'S LAST GIFT? A JADE TIGER HEAD, THE SYMBOL OF OUR SCHOOL...?
WAIT... THERE'S AN INSCRIPTION.
"WHEN THREE ARE CALLED, AND STAND AS ONE, AS ONE THEY'LL FIGHT, THEIR WILL BE DONE... FOR EACH IS BORN ANEW, THE TIGER'S SON."
"THE TIGER'S SON"... THE SONS OF MASTER KEE.
I THINK I UNDERSTAND, MASTER... AND I PRAY WE'LL BE WORTHY.
FOR THIS I PROMISE, ONE DAY YOUR DEATH WILL BE AVENGED-- BY YOUR "SON"--
--THE SONS OF THE TIGER!

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, IN SAN FRANSISCO'S "OTHER GHETTO."
SPAK!
BROTHER, YOU'RE ONE LUCKY DUDE..
YOU JUST GOT YOURSELF A TASTE OF AUTHENTIC KUNG FU.. WHAT YOU CALL YOUR DRAGON STAMP!
HOPE YOU LIKED IT "BROTHER"... THERE'S PLENTY MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE-- KILL HIM!
YOU HEARD THE MAN, DOG-FACE KILL ME... IF YOU CAN GET NEAR ENOUGH TO TRY.
SHOOT, YOU GUYS MAKE ME SICK.
KRACK!
KLUB!
THE BIGGEST DRUG HUSTLERS ON THE NORTH SIDE--
--AND YOU FIGHT LIKE A BUNCH OF GIRLS!
THUMP!
I MEAN, IF YOU WANT ME DEAD, YOU HAVE TO MAKE ME DEAD--
DON'T EXPECT ME TO BEND OVER AND LET YOU DO IT, THOUGH--
--'CAUSE BROTHERS, THAT AIN'T OLD ABE'S WAY!
SPASSH!

BUT, IT QUICKLY BECOMES APPARENT THE WOULD-BE KILLERS HAVE NO STOMACH FOR FIGHTING A VICTIM WHO STRIKES BACK, AND SO...
WHEE-OH. BROTHER ABE! YOU SURE HANDLED THEM.
GUESS THEY WON'T BE BOTHERIN' THIS STREET ANY MORE, WILL THEY?
NOT IF I CAN HELP IT.
THE WAY I SEE IT, SOMEBODY HAS TO STAND UP TO THESE CREEPS... AN' SINCE I'VE GOT THE KNOW-HOW... WELL, IT MIGHT AS WELL BE ME.
WAIT'LL THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS HEAR ABOUT THIS.
THOSE PUSHERS TRIED TO PUT A SCENE ON YOU--
AND YOU PUSHED THEM RIGHT BACK!
SEE Y'ROUND, ABE.
TAKE IT EASY, TAK!.
SOMEONE BEHIND ME...!
HAI--
HUH?
LIN! ARE YOU TRYIN' TO GET YOURSELF KILLED, SNEAKIN' UP ON FOLKS LIKE THAT?
WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' UP HERE, ANYWAY? DIDN'T YOU HAVE A TOURNAMENT TONIGHT?
THAT PART OF MY LIFE IS OVER, ABE, SOMETHING HAPPENED..
IT'S MASTER KEE... HE'S DEAD.
DEAD? ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
IT'S TRUE. LAST NIGHT SOMEONE ATTACKED ME OUTSIDE THE DOJO.. IT MUST HAVE BEEN A TEST, TO SEE HOW MUCH TROUBLE I'D BE.
TONIGHT, WHILE I WAS AWAY, FOUR NINJAS RANSACKED THE SCHOOL.. AND KILLED MASTER KEE!
THAT'S LOUSY, MAN. BUT WHAT CAN I DO?
I WAS HOPING YOU'D HELP ME ABE. I WANT REVENGE.
MAN ENOUGH? MISTER, I'VE GOT MY OWN PROBLEMS-- MY OWN RESPONSIBILITIES
BUT IF IT'LL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER, I'LL COME WITH YOU-- JUST THIS ONCE. AFTER ALL, I OWE THE MASTER SOMETHING...
BUT IF YOU RE NOT MAN ENOUGH..

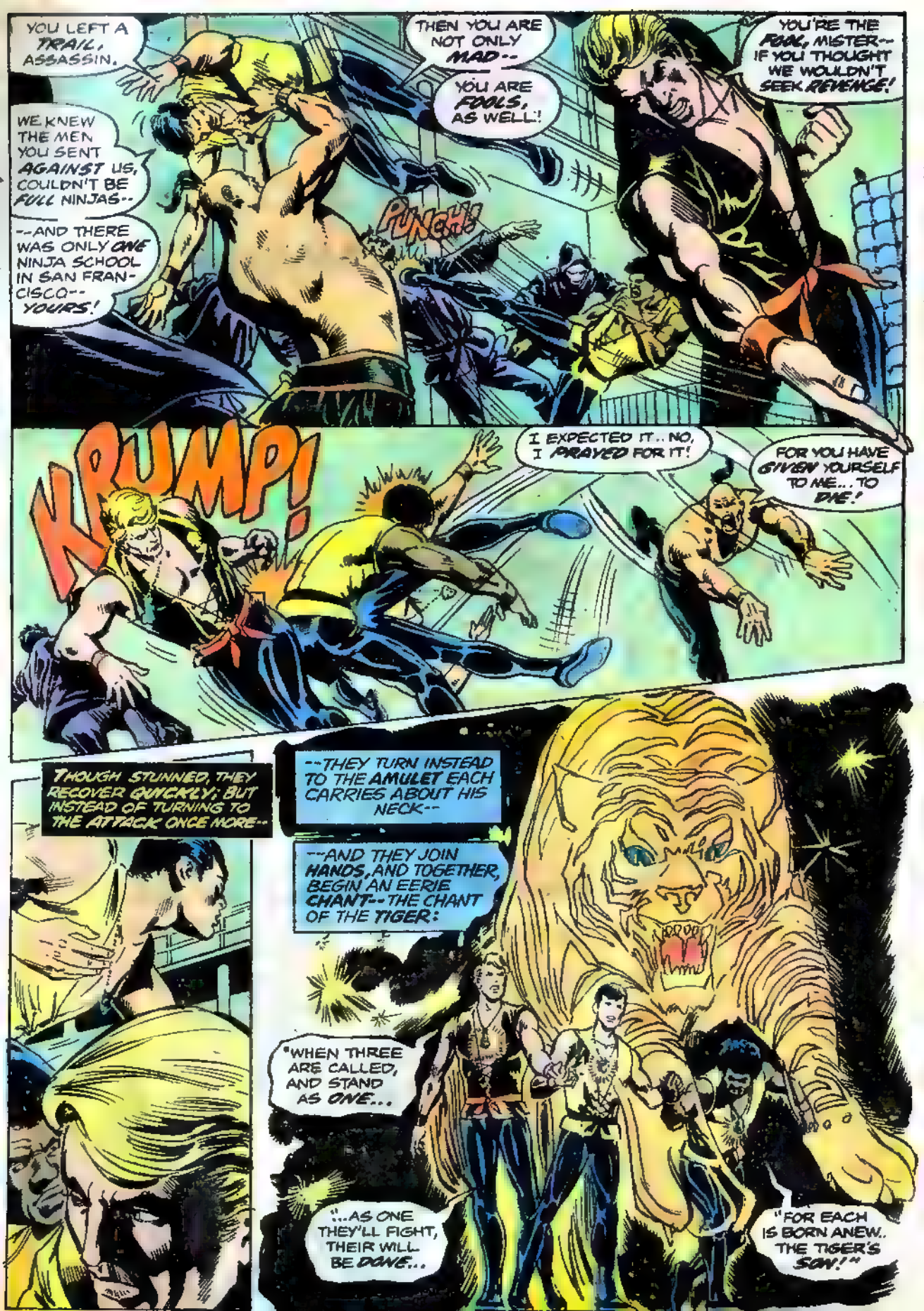
"...WE ALL DO."
WITHIN THE HOUR, AT THE PENTHOUSE HOME OF THE THIRD STUDENT MENTIONED BY MASTER KEE...
...FIVE TOTALLY SILENT FIGURES MOVE STEALTHILY TOWARD THEIR ASSIGNATION WITH DEATH...
...THE DEATH OF A CERTAIN WEALTHY MOVIE STAR...
...THE HOST OF A LATE-EVENING PARTY... ROBERT DIAMOND.
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, ROSELLA.
EVERY TIME I THROW ONE OF THESE BLASTED THINGS, I END UP SWEARING OFF PARTIES FOREVER...
...UNTIL THE NEXT INVITATION COMES...
...AND THE BLASTED CYCLE STARTS OVER
THIS TIME, THOUGH, I'M GOING TO--HUH?
KRASH!
WHAT THE--!
GET OUT OF HERE, ROSELLA!
THAK!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THESE MEN WANT--
--BUT FROM THE WAY THEY'RE ATTACKING--IT WON'T BE PLEASANT!

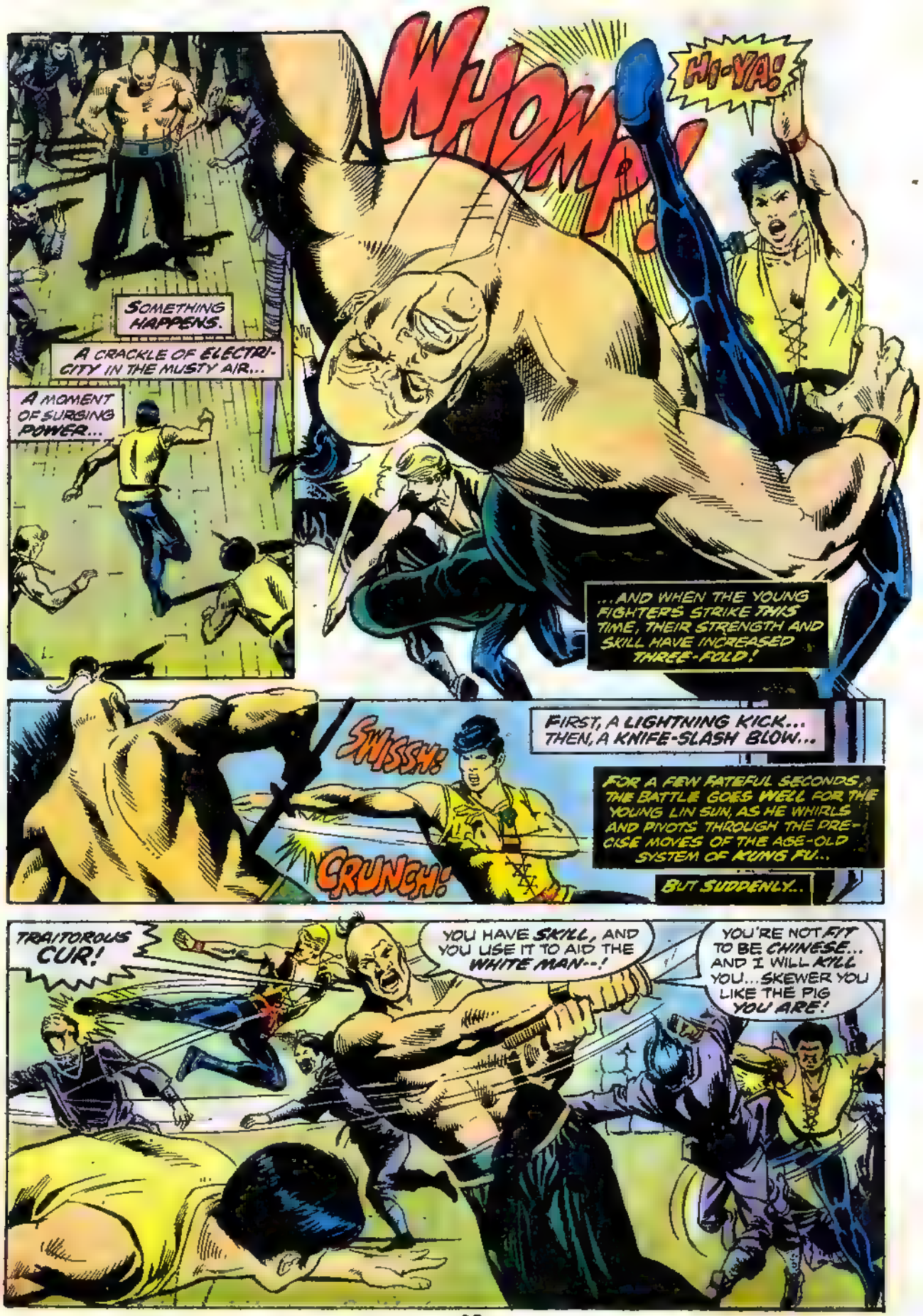
HYAH!
THUNK!
LOOKS LIKE ALL THE TRAINING I RECEIVED WAS WORTH SOMETHING AFTER ALL!
IT MAY NOT HAVE GOTTEN ME ANY NEW ROLES -- BUT IT JUST MAY SAVE MY LIFE!
JUST THEN...
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WERE THE ONE THE NINJAS ATTACKED, LIN!
SO I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE THEY WANT DEAD
LET'S NOT WORRY ABOUT THAT NOW, THOUGH.
BOB'S LUCKY WE DECIDED TO COME HERE RIGHT AWAY--
--HE'S GONNA NEED ALL THE HELP HE CAN GET!
WATCH OUT, YOU SLIMEY SONS OF CRUD! AS OF NOW--
--WE'RE COMIN' THROUGH!

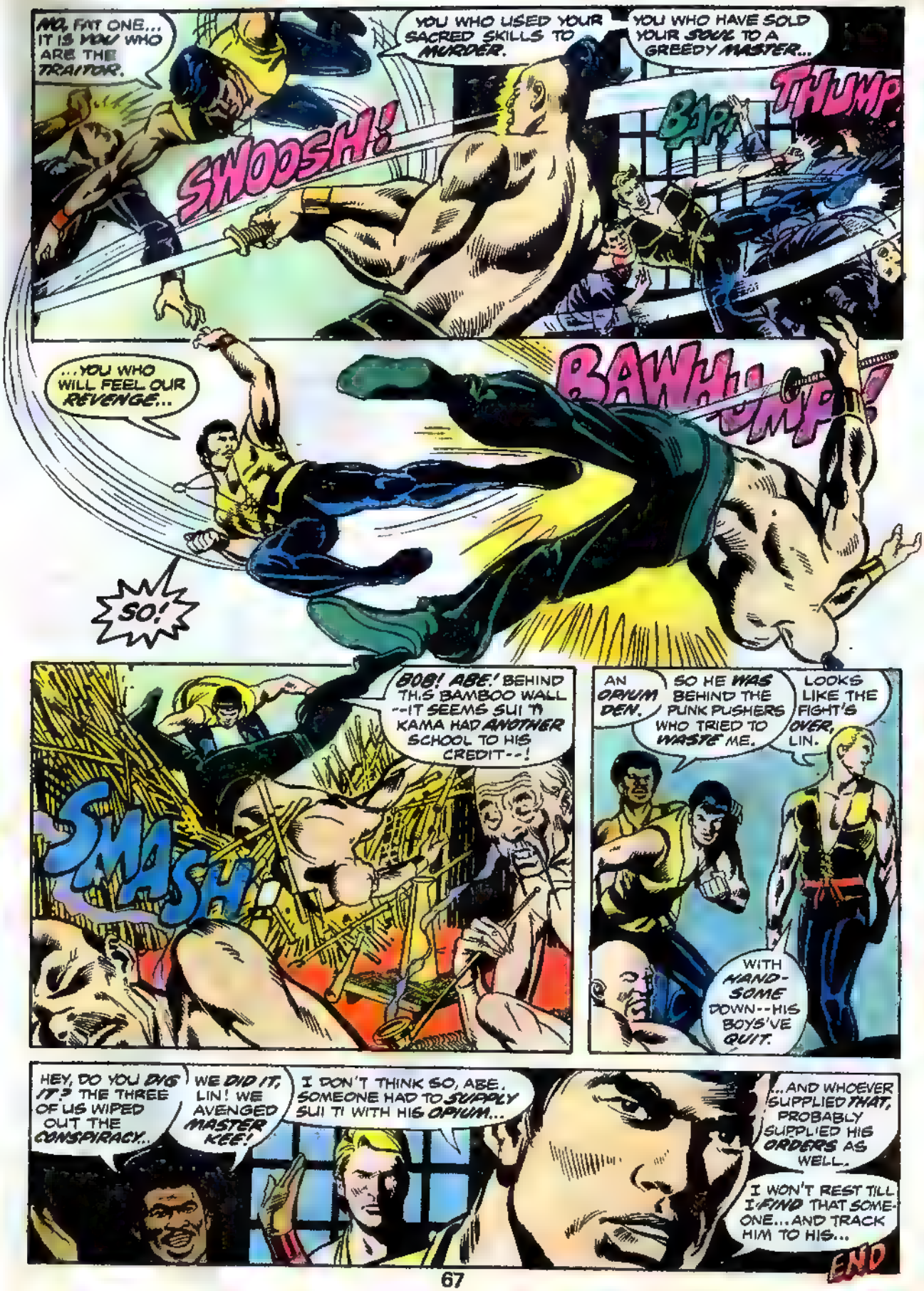
WE HAVE THEM ON THE RUN, ABE, APPARENTLY, THESE NINJAS DON'T LIVE UP TO THE STANDARDS OF THEIR ANCESTORS ..
...AND FRANKLY...
SWAK!
...THAT'S JUST...
...TOO BAD!
AND IN THE END, AT LEAST, THE NINJAS FULFILL THE MYTH:
FOR THEY ARE SILENT...
AND DIE WITHOUT A SCREAM.
Y-YOU KILLED THEM, LIN...
AS THEY KILLED MASTER KEE.
NOW, FOR THE OTHERS...
THEY'RE GONE... AND SO ARE MY GUESTS.
QUICKLY, HIS VOICE ALMOST CHOKED WITH EMOTION, LIN EXPLAINS THE EVENING'S EVENTS... AS BOB DIAMOND LISTENS WITH GROWING WONDER...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO ELIMINATE MASTER KEE?
YOU ARE NOT A CHINESE, BOB...YOU DON'T LIVE IN OUR WORLD, DON'T HEAR THE RUMORS WE HEAR...
THERE ARE LEGENDS...
...TALES OF AN ANCIENT CONSPIRACY AGAINST MANKIND.
IT'S POSSIBLE THE MEMBERS OF THIS CONSPIRACY SAW MASTER KEE AS A THREAT, AND SO DISPOSED OF HIM...
...JUST AS THEY TRIED TO DISPOSE OF US... BECAUSE OF THIS.
HEY, MAN--YOU DON'T THINK THOSE PUSHERS WHO ATTACKED ME--?
THEY MAY HAVE BEEN PART OF IT, ABE--AND THERE NO DOUBT THE NINJAS WE FOUGHT HERE ARE ALSO INVOLVED--

ONE HOUR LATER, IN A SCHOOL LOCATED IN ONE OF CAIRA-TOWN'S LESS DESIREABLE DISTRICTS...
PIG!
BUNT!
I TOLD YOU TO KILL THE CAUCASION... AND YOU'VE FAILED.
THAT FAILURE WILL COST YOU YOUR LIFE...
WHAT WILL IT MATTER TO THEM THAT YOU ARE BUT NOVICES?
...FOR SUI TI KAMA WILL NOT ACCEPT FAILURE, EITHER IN HIMSELF... OR THOSE WHO SERVE HIM!
THE SEVEN SILENT ONES WILL BE MOST DISPLEASED BY THIS NIGHT'S WORK: FOUR TIMES HAVE WE ATTACKED, AND THREE TIMES HAVE WE FAILED.
THEY EXPECT-- THEY DEMAND SUCCESS--
--AND YOU HAVE BROUGHT THEM FAILURE.
NOT COMPLETELY, MASTER OF ASSASSINS.
THEY DID SUCCEED IN KILLING AN AILING OLD MAN...
...AND FOR THAT THEY... AND YOU... WILL DIE...
...AT THE CLAWS OF THE TIGER!
SPIRIT OF MY FATHER! WE ARE ATTACKED-- BY MADMEN--!

-- PART OF THE PLOT TO TAKE AWAY-- THIS.
THE JADE NECKLACE THE MASTER GAVE YOU?
WHAT GOOD IS THAT HUNK OF JUNK TO US, LIN?
IT COULD MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH. DEFEAT...OR VICTORY.
EACH OF YOU...TAKE ONE OF THE CLAWS.
MASTER KEE GAVE US THESE TALISMANS FOR A REASON.
WITH THEM, THE THREE OF US CAN FIGHT AS ONE...AND GET REVENGE ON THE KILLERS OF MASTER KEE.
REVENGE? THAT'S TOO HEAVY FOR ME, MAN.
ABE'S RIGHT... WE'RE NOT ASSASSINS.
COUNT ME OUT, LIN.
I'M SORRY... BUT I CAN'T GO ALL THE WAY.
FINE.
I'LL GO ALONE.
ONE MOMENT.
TWO.
THE MEN EXCHANGE GLANCES; THEIR EYES LOWER.
FINALLY, ONE MAN DRAWS HIMSELF UP, CLEARS HIS THROAT, AND SAYS...
WAIT, LIN. WE'RE COMING WITH YOU.


YOU LEFT A TRAIL, ASSASSIN.
WE KNEW THE MEN YOU SENT AGAINST US, COULDN'T BE FULL NINJAS--
--AND THERE WAS ONLY ONE NINJA SCHOOL IN SAN FRANCISCO-- YOURS!
THEN YOU ARE NOT ONLY MAD--
YOU ARE FOOLS, AS WELL!
PUNCH!
YOU'RE THE FOOL, MISTER-- IF YOU THOUGHT WE WOULDN'T SEEK REVENGE!
KRUMP!
I EXPECTED IT.. NO, I PRAYED FOR IT!
FOR YOU HAVE GIVEN YOURSELF TO ME... TO DIE!
THOUGH STUNNED, THEY RECOVER QUICKLY; BUT INSTEAD OF TURNING TO THE ATTACK ONCE MORE--
--THEY TURN INSTEAD TO THE AMULET EACH CARRIES ABOUT HIS NECK--
--AND THEY JOIN HANDS, AND TOGETHER, BEGIN AN EERIE CHANT--THE CHANT OF THE TIGER:
"WHEN THREE ARE CALLED, AND STAND AS ONE...
"...AS ONE THEY'LL FIGHT, THEIR WILL BE DONE...
"FOR EACH IS BORN ANEW.. THE TIGER'S SON!"

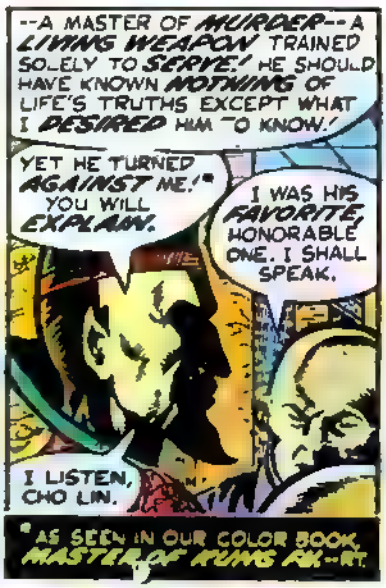

WHOMP!
HI-YA!
SOMETHING HAPPENS.
A CRACKLE OF ELECTRICITY IN THE MUSTY AIR...
A MOMENT OF SURGING POWER...
...AND WHEN THE YOUNG FIGHTERS STRIKE THIS TIME, THEIR STRENGTH AND SKILL HAVE INCREASED THREE-FOLD!
FIRST, A LIGHTNING KICK... THEN, A KNIFE-SLASH BLOW...
SWISSH!
CRUNCH!
FOR A FEW FATEFUL SECONDS, THE BATTLE GOES WELL FOR THE YOUNG LIN SUN, AS HE WHIRLS AND PIVOTS THROUGH THE PRECISE MOVES OF THE AGE-OLD SYSTEM OF KUNG FU...
BUT SUDDENLY...
TRAITOROUS CUR!
YOU HAVE SKILL, AND YOU USE IT TO AID THE WHITE MAN--!
YOU'RE NOT FIT TO BE CHINESE... AND I WILL KILL YOU... SKEWER YOU LIKE THE PIG YOU ARE!


NO, FAT ONE... IT IS YOU WHO ARE THE TRAITOR.
YOU WHO USED YOUR SACRED SKILLS TO MURDER.
YOU WHO HAVE SOLD YOUR SOUL TO A GREEDY MASTER...
SWOOSH!
BAP!
THUMP!
...YOU WHO WILL FEEL OUR REVENGE...
BAWHUMP!
SO!
BOB! ABE! BEHIND THIS BAMBOO WALL --IT SEEMS SUI TI KAMA HAD ANOTHER SCHOOL TO HIS CREDIT--!
SMASH
AN OPIUM DEN.
SO HE WAS BEHIND THE PUNK PUSHERS WHO TRIED TO WASTE ME.
LOOKS LIKE THE FIGHT'S OVER, LIN.
WITH HANDSOME DOWN--HIS BOYS'VE QUIT.
HEY, DO YOU DIG IT? THE THREE OF US WIPED OUT THE CONSPIRACY..
WE DID IT, LIN! WE AVENGED MASTER KEE!
I DON'T THINK SO, ABE. SOMEONE HAD TO SUPPLY SUI TI WITH HIS OPIUM...
...AND WHOEVER SUPPLIED THAT, PROBABLY SUPPLIED HIS ORDERS AS WELL.
I WON'T REST TILL I FIND THAT SOMEONE...AND TRACK HIM TO HIS...
END

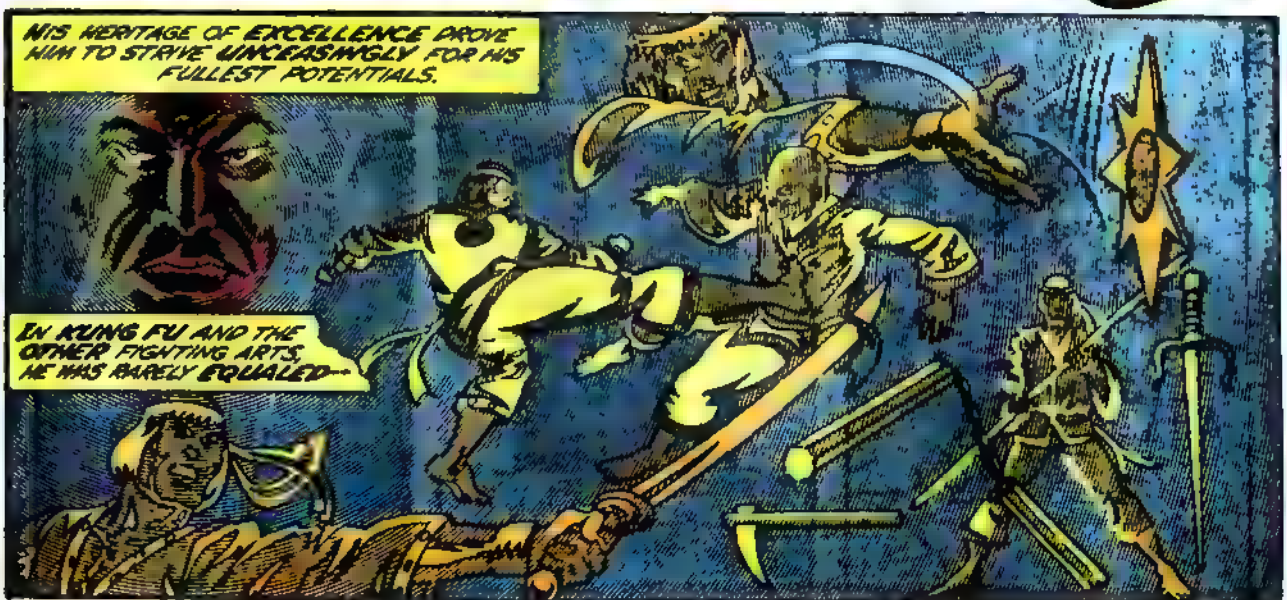
ENTER, NOW, A WORLD UNLIKE ANY YOU HAVE ENTERED BEFORE--A WORLD WHERE EVIL IS THE PERSONAL POPERTY OF THE MOST INFAMOUS VILLAIN OF ALL TIME--
FU MANCHU
--AND THE POWER TO OPPOSE THIS ALL-ENCOPASSING INEQUITY RESTS WITH ANOTHER LONE MAN--
SHANG-CHI--
MASTER OF
KUNG FU!
PRIESTS! FU MANCHU DEMANDS AN EXPLANATION-- OR YOUR MISERABLE LIVES!
STEVE ENGLEHART, SCRIPT
JIM STARLIN, AL MILGROM, } ART
GEORGE ROUSSOS, COLORS
FEATURING CHARACTERS CREATED BY SAX ROHMER

AN EXPLANATION, O' CELESTIAL ONE? IN WHAT MANNER MAY WE, HUMBLE MASTERS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS, ENLIGHTEN THE LORD OF THE SI-FAN?
IS NOT THE WISDOM AND POWER OF THE MANDARIN FU MANCHU A SOURCE OF LEGEND?
I KNOW MANY THINGS, PRIEST. FOR THE BETTER PART OF TWO CENTURIES, I HAVE SOUGHT KNOWLEDGE, AND THROUGH IT, POWER!
KNOWLEDGE IS NOT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. THE REST OF THE WORLD SIMPLY DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHERE OR HOW TO SEARCH IT OUT.
HOWEVER--

--I DO NOT KNOW MY SON!
YOU FOUR SUPERVISED HIS INSTRUCTION IN THE MENTAL AND MARTIAL ARTS SINCE THE DAY HIS AMERICAN MOTHER DELIVERED HIM UP TO ME!
SHANG-CHI WAS TO BE MY PRIME AGENT--


--A MASTER OF MURDER--A LIVING WEAPON TRAINED SOLELY TO SERVE! HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN NOTHING OF LIFE'S TRUTHS EXCEPT WHAT I DESIRED HIM TO KNOW!
YET HE TURNED AGAINST ME!* YOU WILL EXPLAIN.
I WAS HIS FAVORITE, HONORABLE ONE. I SHALL SPEAK.
I LISTEN, CHO LIN.
*AS SEEN IN OUR COLOR BOOK, MASTER OF KUNG FU--RT.

SHANG-CHI ALWAYS STOOD APART FROM THE OTHER STUDENTS, NOT OVERTLY, AND NOT THROUGH HIS CHOICE OR THAT OF THE OTHERS.
IT WAS ONLY THAT HE WAS YOUR SON.


HIS HERITAGE OF EXCELLENCE DROVE HIM TO STRIVE UNCEASINGLY FOR HIS FULLEST POTENTIALS.
IN KUNG FU AND THE OTHER FIGHTING ARTS, HE WAS RARELY EQUALED--

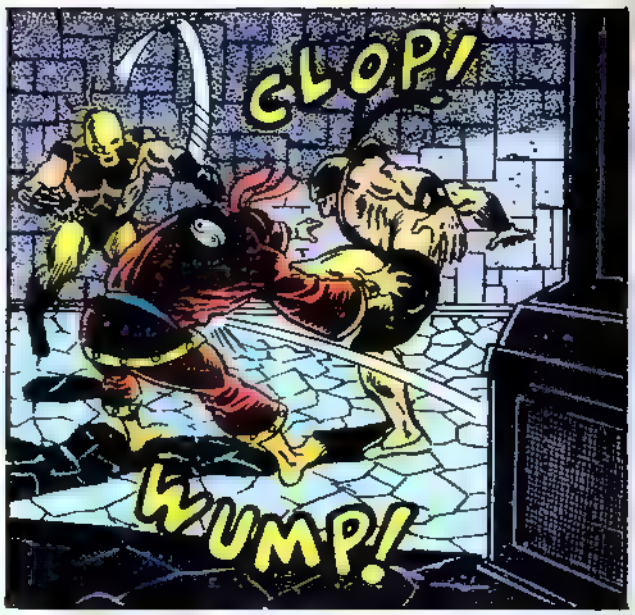
--AND IN MENTAL DISCIPLINE...DO YOU RECALL THE DAY OF HIS FOURTEENTH BIRTHDAY?
SHANG-CHI FIGHTS WELL, O' CELESTIAL ONE. ADOLESCENCE, INSTEAD OF CONFUSING HIS BODY, HAS BIRTHED NEW SPEED.
AH...
...YET I BELIEVE I DETECT MORE OF AN EMPHASIS UPON GRACE THAN UPON POWER, CHO LIN.
I WONDER IF HIDING THE PURPOSE OF HIS TRAINING FROM HIM WAS WISE.
THOUGH WELL-VERSED IN THE WAYS OF DEATH, HE HAS NEVER BEEN TRULY TESTED FOR A KILLER-INSTINCT!
A TEST MUST BE MADE.
THAT NIGHT, SHANG-CHI WITHDREW TO A LITTLE-USED SECTION OF THE OUTER QUARTERS, TO MEDITATE UPON HIS LIFE.
LOGICALLY, WE COULD EXPECT NO INTERRUPTION TO A NIGHT-LONG JOURNEY INTO HIS MIND--
--BUT LOGIC IS MERELY A METHOD OF SIMPLYFYING ONE'S REALITY.
A BRUSH OF SILK ON SLATE COMPLICATES IT.
AS SHANG-CHI STRAINED HIS STILL-DEVELOPING SENSES, HE FOUND HIMSELF UNABLE TO SEE OR HEAR ANY CAUSE FOR THE SLIGHT SOUND.
OF COURSE, THAT DROVE HIM TO HIS FEET, TO INVESTIGATE--
--AS WE HAD PLANNED.

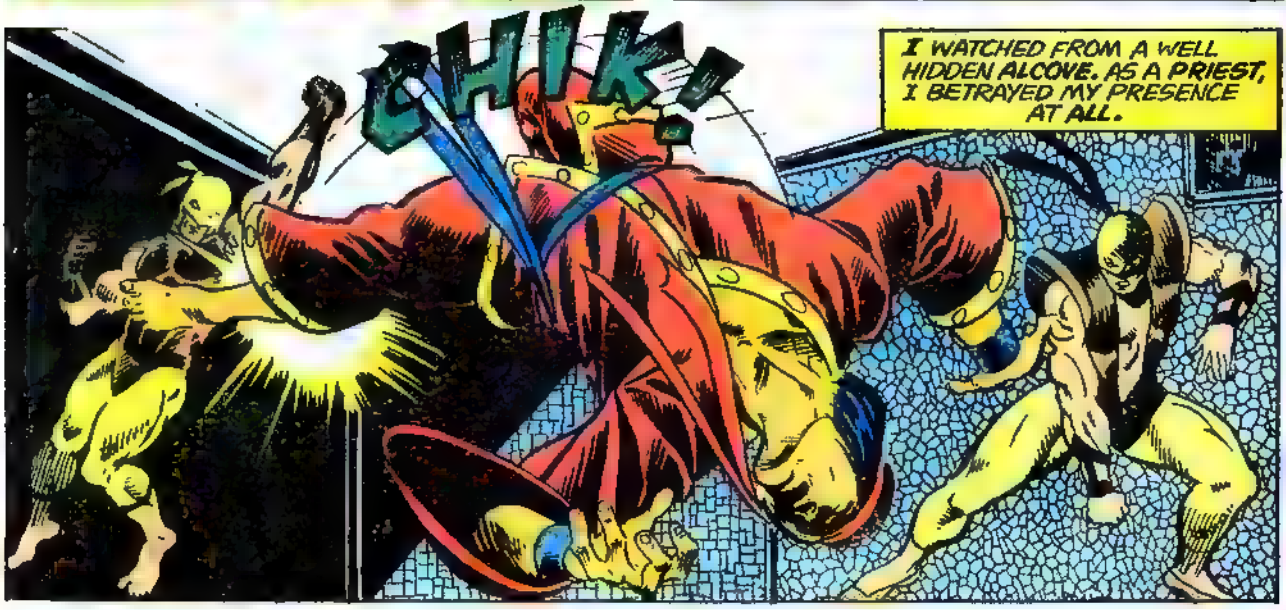
HAIEEEEEEEEEE!

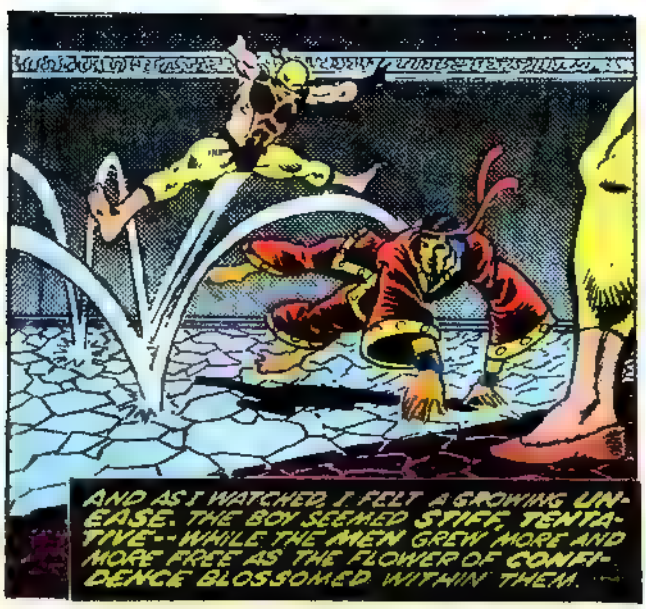
THE SON OF FU MANCHU FIGHTS AS WE WERE TOLD!
IT WAS CLEVER OF THE BRITISH TO HIRE ALL FOUR OF US!

ONCE AGAIN AS SO MANY TIMES IN THE PAST, SHANG-CHI BELIEVED THAT WHICH YOU WISHED HIM TO BELIEVE.

HIS ASSAILANTS WERE FULL-GROWN MEN—NOT MASTERS, BY ANY MEANS, BUT EXCELLENT WARRIORS, NONETHELESS.
KA!


CLOP!
WUMP!


I WATCHED FROM A WELL HIDDEN ALCOVE. AS A PRIEST, I BETRAYED MY PRESENCE AT ALL.
CHIK!


AND AS I WATCHED, I FELT A GROWING UNEASE. THE BOY SEEMED STIFF, TENTATIVE--WHILE THE MEN GREW MORE AND MORE FREE AS THE FLOWER OF CONFIDENCE BLOSSOMED WITHIN THEM.

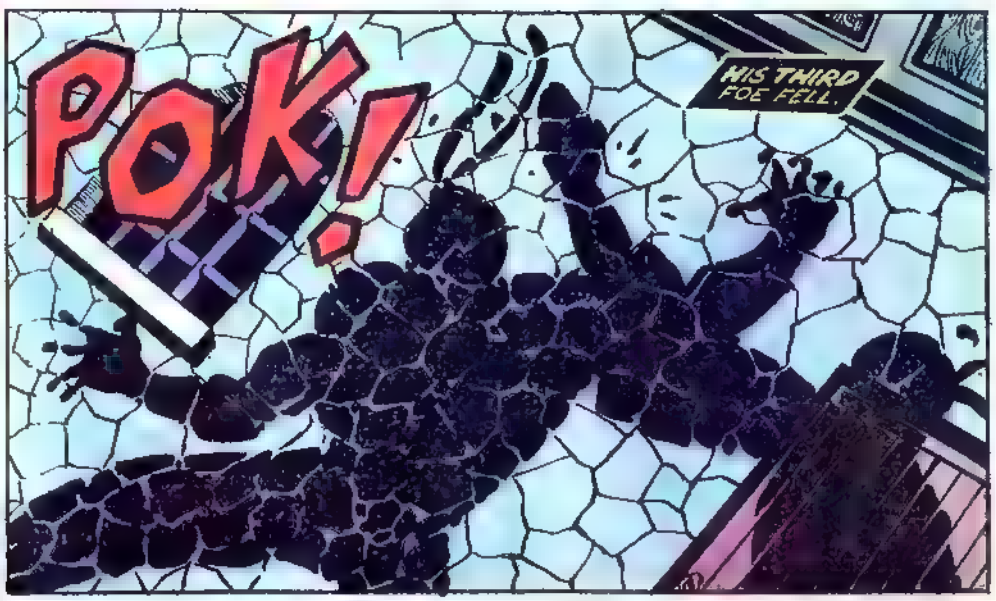
PERHAPS, I THOUGHT, MY LONG YEARS OF APPROVAL FOR SHANG-CHI HAD CAUSED THE WEED OF OVER-CONFIDENCE TO SPROUT WITHIN ME.
PERHAPS HIS STEADY PROGRESS AND BOUNDLESS ENTHUSIASM HAD LED ME TO PLACE HIM IN TOO MUCH DANGER TOO SOON.

IT WAS MY FIRST MOMENT OF SELF-DOUBT IN FOURTEEN YEARS. IT HAS BEEN MY LAST.
UHHGH!
IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT YOUR SON HAD BEEN WAITING UNTIL THE FIRST WAVE OF FORCE HAD ROLLED PAST HIM.
HE HAD BECOME THE TIDE--
--AND THE BOOTIDE.
HERE, ASSASSINS! LET THESE COLD, CRUEL BLADES RELEASE HIS BOILING BLOOD FROM ITS VEINS!
WE OBEY, NOBLE SIR! THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU LIVES WITHIN THIS BOY--

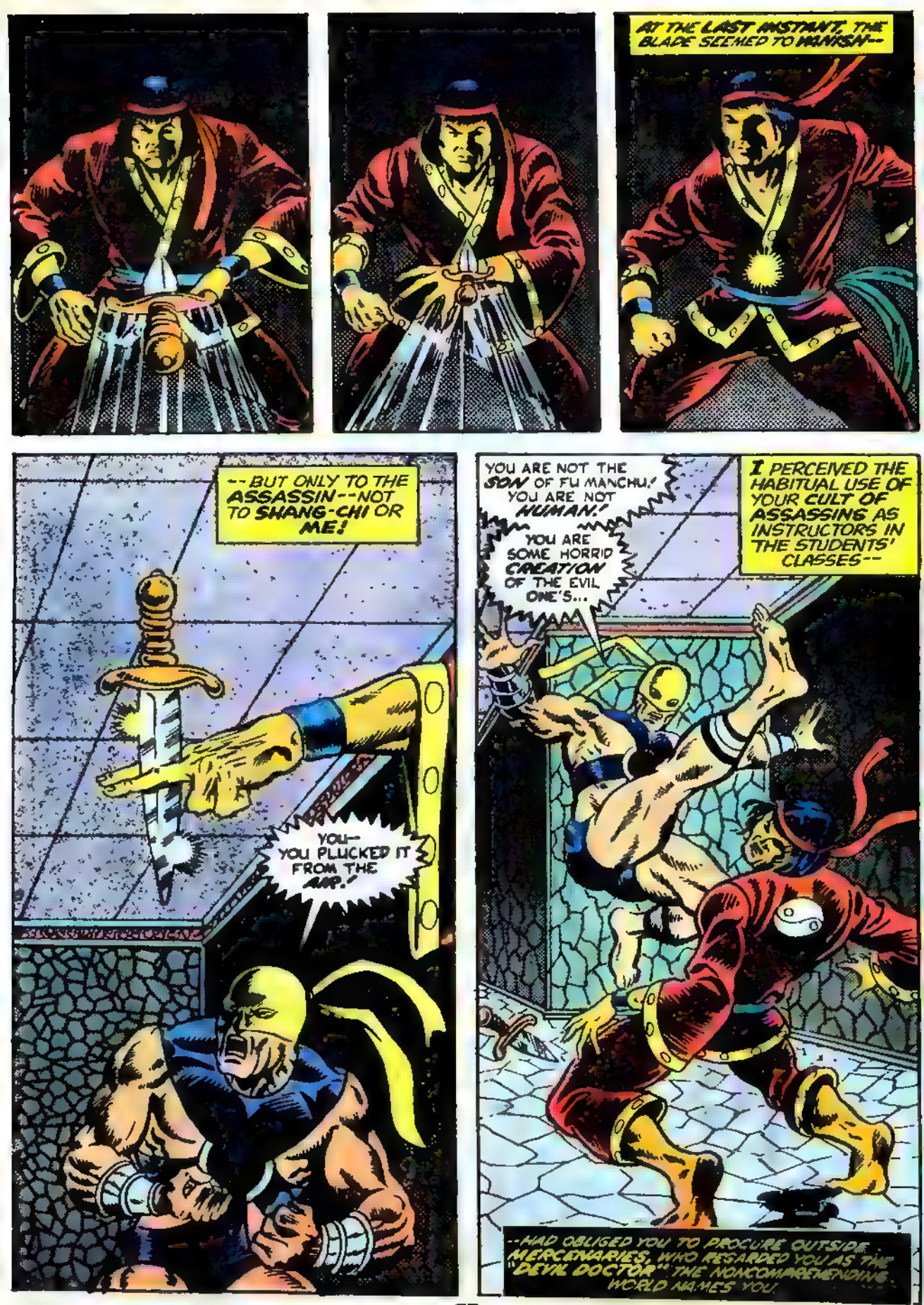
--MUST GRACE THE FLOORS OF FU MANCHU BELOW H--
FFFT!
MISSED, THE LAD LEAPS LIKE A LOCUST! I'LL--
FFFT!
MISSED AGAIN!
NOW, BROTHER! WE HAVE HIM BETWEEN US!
YES! STRIKE NOW!
AAA
WHOSE BLOOD MUST GRACE THESE FLOORS?
YOU SNAKE! MY BROTHER WILL LOSE HIS ARM!
NOW YOU SHALL DIE IN PIECES!
I FROWNED. SPEECH IS UNNECESSARY DURING COMBAT.
SHANG-CHI'S SOLE RESPONSE WAS TO GATHER HIMSELF. THOUGH HIS PREVIOUS WORDS HAD BEEN ERRORS--
--I NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THE SPEED WITH WHICH HE RETURNED TO THE LESSONS OF HIS INSTRUCTION.
PERHAPS HE HAD SURRENDERED TO PRIDE FOR THE MOMENT--YET, HE HAD FOUGHT FREE OF IT, OVERCOMING HIS GREATEST FOE: HIMSELF.
HE WHO DOES THAT FEARS NOTHING--

KRAK!
--AND THUS, OVERCOMES.
HUNNN!

MY-- MY SWORD--


POK!
HIS THIRD FOE FELL.

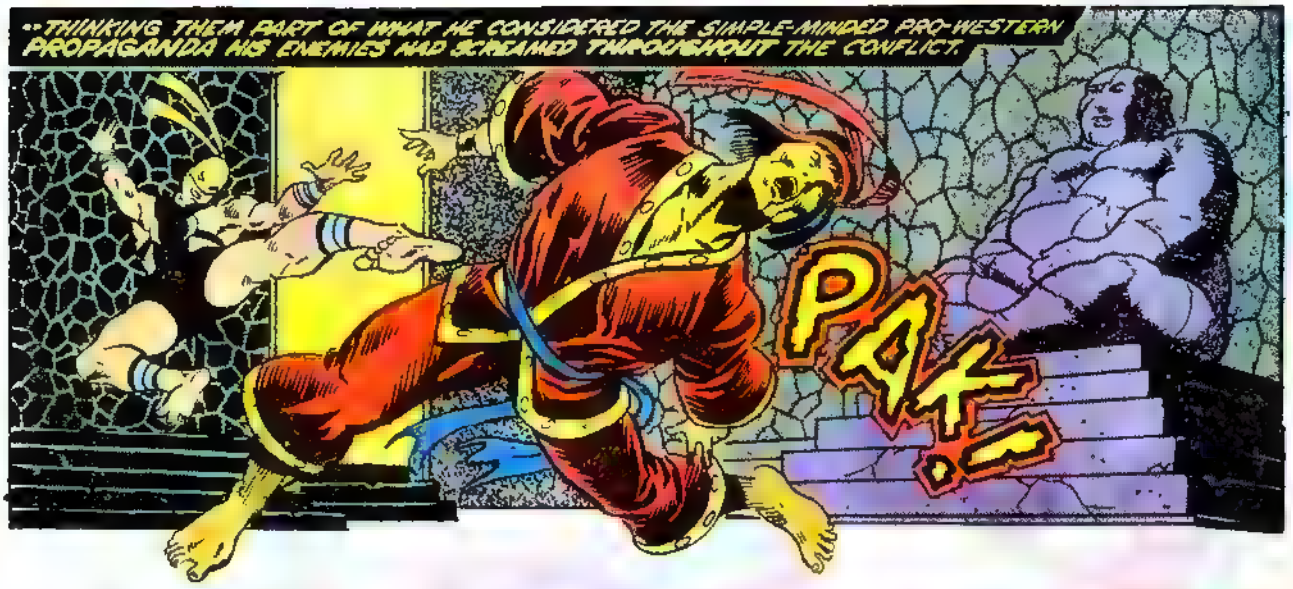
SO THERE REMAINED BUT THE LEADER--A TALL, LIMBER MAN WITH THE LANGUID BUT DEADLY DEMEANOR OF THE PROFESSIONAL ASSASSIN--
--AND A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD YOUTH WHO HAD DISPATCHED THE MAN'S AIDES IN LESS THAN THREE MINUTES.
YOU HAD PROVIDED THESE KILLERS FOR THE YEST, O'CELESTIAL ONE. I KNEW NOTHING OF THEIR CAPABILITIES--
--YET I READ IN MANY TINY SIGNS THAT THIS LEADER WAS MUCH MORE DANGEROUS THAN HIS FOLLOWERS.
THE BRITISH DEMAND YOUR LIFE, LITTLE BOY--AND I NEVER FAIL!
FOR A MOMENT, IT SEEMED AS IF SHANG-CHI WOULD ALLOW PRIDE TO CONTROL HIM AGAIN, AND FORCE A BEAST-BEGETTING RETORT FROM HIS LIPS--
--BUT HE HAD LEARNED--AND IT WAS WELL THAT HE HAD--
--FOR THE ASSASSIN ABRUPTLY HURLED HIS HIDDEN DAGGER DIRECTLY AT HIS CHEST!


AT THE LAST INSTANT, THE BLADE SEEMED TO WAVER--
--BUT ONLY TO THE ASSASSIN--NOT TO SHANG-CHI OR ME!
YOU--YOU PLUCKED IT FROM THE AIR!
I PERCEIVED THE HABITUAL USE OF YOUR CULT OF ASSASSINS AS INSTRUCTORS IN THE STUDENTS' CLASSES--
YOU ARE NOT THE SON OF FU MANCHU! YOU ARE NOT HUMAN!
YOU ARE SOME HORRID CREATION OF THE EVIL ONE'S...
--HAD OBLIGED YOU TO PROCURE OUTSIDE MERCENARIES, WHO REGARDED YOU AS THE "DEVIL DOCTOR" THE NONCOMPREHENDING WORLD NAMES YOU.

SHANG-CHI, HOWEVER, HEARD HIS WORDS ONLY BARELY--
--A TRAIT I LATER DISCUSSED WITH HIM.

KEI
P!

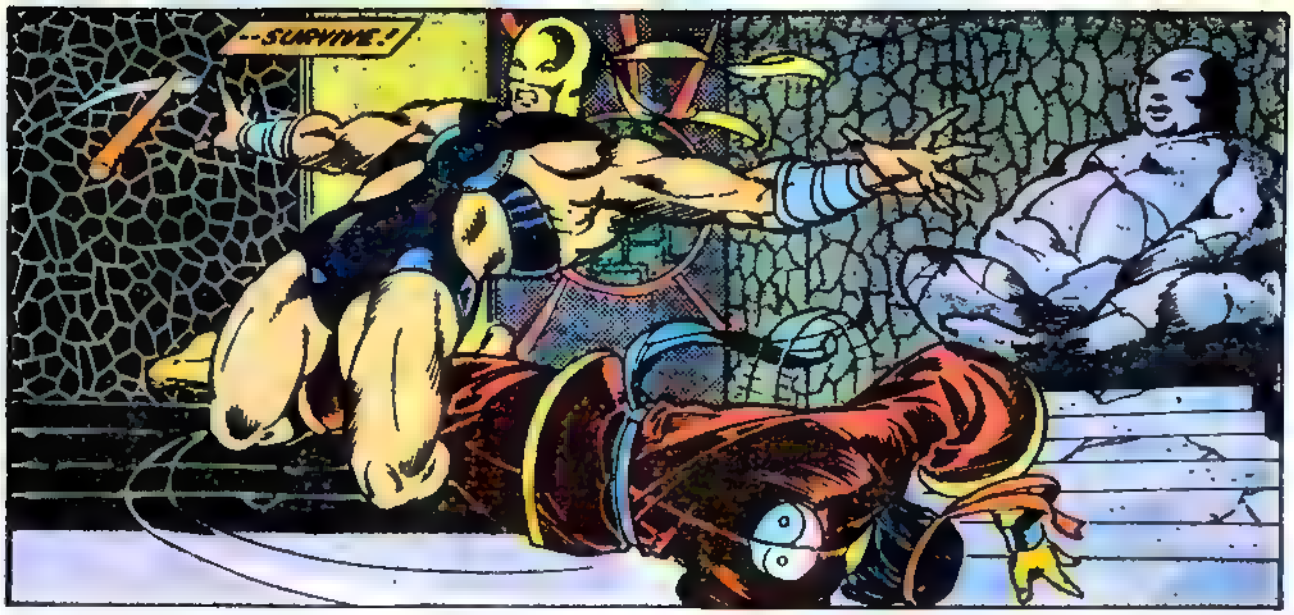
AFTER THAT DISCUSSION, I REMEMBER, HE TOLD ME HE HAD HEARD THE WORDS, AND, TOO SWIFTLY DISREGARDED THEM--
BLOD!


--THINKING THEM PART OF WHAT HE CONSIDERED THE SIMPLE-MINDED PRO-WESTERN PROPAGANDA HIS ENEMIES HAD SCREAMED THROUGHOUT THE CONFLICT.
PAK

IN THIS CASE HE WAS DROPPED, HIS BRAIN ADRIFT, BY THE ASSASSIN'S BERSERK ATTACK--

--BUT AS DEATH APPROACHED, BLADE UPRAISED, SHANG-CHI CALLED UPON HIS CHI--

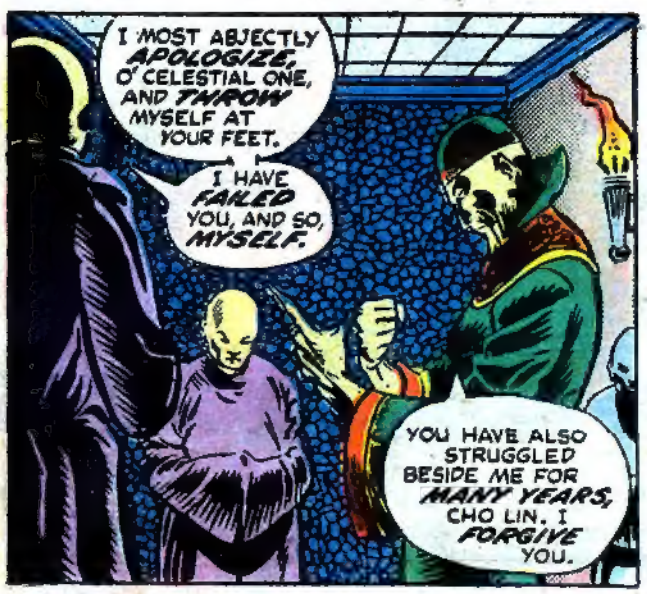
--HIS RULING STRENGTH--HIS SPIRIT--
--TO TRULY SEE WITH HIS EYES--TO LISTEN WITH HIS EARS--TO MASTER HIS BODY, SO THAT HE MIGHT--

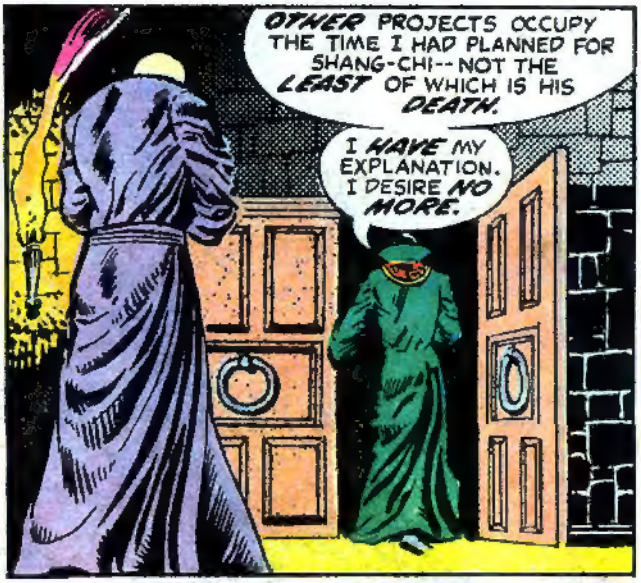

--SURVIVE!

THUNK!

THE BATTLE WAS COMPLETED.
I STEPPED FROM MY CONCEALMENT, SHANG-CHI WAS SURPRISED, AND TOLD ME SO.
I REPLIED--
STUDENT SHANG-CHI, THIS WAS A TEST YOUR FATHER ORDERED, TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE THE BOY HE BELIEVES YOU TO BE.
YOU HAVE HONORED HIM.
THIS--
WAS
A--
TEST?

I INTERPRETED HIS WORDS AS ASTONISHMENT OVER THE THOROUGHNESS OF YOUR ENDEAVORS...
FOOL! HE WAS OBVIOUSLY UPSET OVER THE BRUTALITY AND SUFFERING HE SAW IN MY TEST! HE SAW NOT THE NEED!
CHO LIN, I AM AMAZED AT SUCH INSENSITIVITY IN YOU!


I MOST ABJECTLY APOLOGIZE, O' CELESTIAL ONE, AND THROW MYSELF AT YOUR FEET.
I HAVE FAILED YOU, AND SO, MYSELF.
YOU HAVE ALSO STRUGGLED BESIDE ME FOR MANY YEARS, CHO LIN. I FORGIVE YOU.


OTHER PROJECTS OCCUPY THE TIME I HAD PLANNED FOR SHANG-CHI--NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS HIS DEATH.
I HAVE MY EXPLANATION. I DESIRE NO MORE.

YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE, HONORABLE ONE.
YOU KNOW THAT SERVING YOU IS MY GREATEST JOY...
FIN

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN THE AVENGERS #73
ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN THE AVENGERS #51
PENCILS BY RON WILSON & KEITH POLLARD
INKS BY MIKE ESPOSITO
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